

THE PROFESSIONAL *Gambler's* HANDBOOK

**Beating the System
by Hook and by Crook**

Weasel Murphy



THE **PROFESSIONAL** *Gambler's* HANDBOOK

**Beating the System
by Hook and by Crook**

Weasel Murphy

Paladin Press • Boulder, Colorado

THE
PI
C
H

THE
PROFESSIONAL
Gambler's
HANDBOOK

The Professional Gambler's Handbook: Beating the System by Hook and by Crook
by Weasel Murphy

Copyright © 1997 by Weasel Murphy

ISBN 0-87364-915-X

Printed in the United States of America

Published by Paladin Press, a division of
Paladin Enterprises, Inc., P.O. Box 1307,
Boulder, Colorado 80306, USA.
(303) 443-7250

Direct inquiries and/or orders to the above address.

PALADIN, PALADIN PRESS, and the "horse head" design
are trademarks belonging to Paladin Enterprises and
registered in United States Patent and Trademark Office.

All rights reserved. Except for use in a review, no
portion of this book may be reproduced in any form
without the express written permission of the publisher.

Neither the author nor the publisher assumes
any responsibility for the use or misuse of
information contained in this book.

CONTENTS

Crook

INTRODUCTION ♠ 1

CHAPTER 1

CASINOS, CARD ROOMS, AND THE PEOPLE WHO RUN THEM ♠ 3

CHAPTER 2

CHEATING WITH CARDS ♠ 15

CHAPTER 3

SLOT MACHINES ♠ 47

CHAPTER 4

CHEATING AT CRAPS ♠ 65

CHAPTER 5

CARNIVAL GAMES ♠ 89

CHAPTER 6

STREET CONS AND OTHER CHEATING METHODS ♠ 97

CHAPTER 7

STAYING ONE UP ON THE IRS ♠ 109

GLOSSARY ♠ 113

WARNING

This book is written for the sole purpose of entertainment and education. It is not the intention of the author to promote or condone cheating. Many methods described in this book are illegal in any legalized gambling establishment or legalized games. Penalties for cheating vary from state to state and town to town. In most cases, cheating in a legalized gaming establishment is punishable as a felony.

AUTHOR'S DISCLAIMER

Various incidents, dates, names, and location of events may have been altered to protect the innocent, guilty, and those who wish to remain anonymous.

INTRODUCTION

This book is written for everyone who has been cheated at one time or another and for those who wish not to be cheated. Knowing how to cheat is being able to identify a situation where cheating is taking place. Many games of chance are identified in this book, and methods of cheating at these games are explained. As fast as the manufacturers of gaming machines add devices to keep people from cheating them, someone is finding ways to bypass the new devices. With the advancement of technology in the surveillance area, cheats have found ways to evade them as well.

Knowing how to manipulate cards and dice is an art. At parties and family functions, it's entertaining to watch someone who can perform tricks with cards and dice. Although it's underhanded and somewhat immoral to cheat others, there is a sense of power just in knowing how to do it. Most people can master many of the tricks outlined in this book in a very short period of time. All it takes is practice.

It cannot be overstated that cheating in legalized public gaming houses is illegal. Penalties for cheating vary from state to state, but most violations are considered felonies. Casinos take seriously the prosecution of persons caught cheating. In illegal gambling activities, getting caught cheating will not bring about fines or jail terms. The penalties are usually more severe.

CA AL RU

T
gambl
has c

M
but w
gambl
throw
two w

O
the ea
Wash
opera
game
Many
mach
Vegas
to hol

In
10 ye
Down
such a
boost.

CASINOS, CARD ROOMS, AND THE PEOPLE WHO RUN THEM

This chapter deals primarily with bits and pieces about gambling and its beginning. Included are views the author has on cheating and different types of gambling houses.

A QUICK HISTORY LESSON

Many different opinions exist on when gambling started, but who really knows? Cave men probably had some type of gambling interest. I can visualize contests that involved throwing bones into a circle. "I bet six land in the circle and two will be within a boar's ear of the center."

Open gambling in the United States took a slow start in the early 1800s, from New Orleans to San Francisco, and from Washington, D.C., to Toledo. As fast as casinos opened for operation, laws were introduced to make them illegal. Big games of that period were faro, craps, blackjack, and poker. Many establishments had slot machines. In the 1950s, pinball machines became popular. They were still playing faro in Las Vegas in the early 1970s. The Union Plaza was one of the last to hold a faro game.

In early 1930, Nevada legalized gambling, but it would be 10 years before casino gambling would become popular. Downtown clubs like the El Cortez and luxury strip hotels such as the El Rancho Vegas gave Nevada gambling its big boost. Today, the El Cortez is still in operation and has one of

the best steak specials anywhere. The El Rancho Vegas burned to the ground and is presently a vacant lot across the street from the Sahara. Although much is said about Las Vegas, for many years Reno topped Las Vegas in gaming and entertainment activity. At one time, Reno had the dubious distinction of being the divorce capital of the world.

Organized crime got its start in casino gaming in the mid-1940s with the opening of the Flamingo Hotel. This hotel was the mastermind and dream come true for the infamous "Bugsy" Siegel. In its day, the Flamingo was the ultimate in gambling atmosphere. As of this writing, the Hilton Corporation owns and operates the Flamingo. Rumor has it Mr. Siegel built secret passages behind walls in the casino for his escape, should the need arise. As many know, the need arose, but Mr. Siegel didn't make it.

DO CASINOS CHEAT?

Of course they do. Most of the blatant cheating takes place in small, out-of-the-way places, and most of that cheating is done by floor-level employees. It wouldn't be fair to say cheating in major casinos is excessive, but the only reason for that is the Gaming Commission.

An argument often used concerning whether big casinos cheat is, why? Why do they cheat when all the odds are in their favor? Why do people place themselves in a position to lose their license to operate? Greed is one of many answers. Stealing just to get away with it is another. There's a saying that answers why people in good positions cheat and steal: "Which tastes better? A watermelon stolen from a melon patch, or the one you had to buy in the store?"

MAJOR CASINOS

The operation of a major casino in today's environment is

like any other big business: almost all have stockholders, CEOs, a board of directors, and so on. Years ago this wasn't the case. Many were run by organized crime families or former big-time gamblers making even bigger big time. In those days a small-time gambler could enjoy most of the ambiance a high roller could: free buffets, fine shows, and inexpensive rooms.

Those days are gone. Corporations feel the necessity to make money at every turn. Tickets for shows are expensive, the cost of dining is outrageous, and luxury rooms are too expensive for the average working man. Competition between these casino giants is tremendous. Several major hotels have built theme parks so families on vacation will no longer bypass Las Vegas because there's nothing for the kids. Paying for these new additions is extremely expensive. So ask yourself, would these expenses give management the motive to cheat now and then?

Although upper management does its share, many cases of cheating take place at the floor level. Cheating at floor level usually benefits the floor men and dealers and rarely helps the house. Reasons for these people cheating are many, but most often it comes down to plain greed.

FLEECING THE ARABS

I knew a dealer who worked at a major casino in Las Vegas who was called on to do his handiwork whenever the Arabs came to town. I'm not talking about the average Arab. These are the oil barons and their families. Ten million dollars would be considered "walking around money" to them. There's a joke connected with these people that says an Arab sheik and one of his wives went to an art gallery. After purchasing several paintings valued at millions of dollars, the sheik turned to his wife and said, "Now that we have the greeting cards, let's go buy some gifts."

According to this dealer and others in the know, it was

normal practice to fleece these Arabs every time they came to town. They were easy pickings because they didn't seem to care about losing, and if they did, they didn't complain. Dealers didn't complain either, because tips were always exceptional. To get away with fleecing the Arabs, the games would be in private suites. This maneuver was agreeable to the Arabs because they like their privacy. The suites were usually on the top floor of the hotel because the scrutiny of gaming officials is very limited under these conditions.

One interesting story about a visit by these Arabs tells of an invitation made by a major hotel and casino. The invitation included free accommodations (the entire top floor of the hotel), free food, free shows, and just about anything else except gambling. Airfare would have been included, but the Arab dignitaries had their own planes. They came. Sheriff Ralph Lamb, and a sizable police escort, greeted them on arrival at the Hughes private airfield. The reason for the police escort had nothing to do with the welcome committee: it was because the Arabs had brought an arsenal of weapons. The weapons were seized and held in safekeeping until the Arabs departed Las Vegas.

Craps, blackjack, and mini-baccarat tables were already in place when the entourage arrived. Gambling began almost immediately. No sooner had gambling started when the Arabs began complaining about the small baccarat tables. The casino manager attempted to explain that it would be impossible to get a standard table upstairs. The Arabs became enraged and complaints became threats to take their business elsewhere. This was a serious problem, and the casino manager wasn't about to lose this golden-egg-laying goose. The casino manager immediately got on the phone and called a local helicopter company and a building contractor. When the helicopter arrived, employees of the hotel had already carried a standard baccarat table into the parking lot. The summoned building contractor was almost finished cutting a hole in the

roof of the hotel. Minutes after arriving, the helicopter lifted the baccarat table to the top of the hotel and lowered it into the freshly cut hole in the roof. Employees then carried the table to the room where the Arabs were patiently waiting.

It was reported this maneuver so pleased the Arabs they decided to stay an extra week and lost an extra \$50 million.

CHEATING

There are many ways to cheat. This book will cover many of them, but there are several techniques I feel are morally wrong although legally right.

Clocks and Windows

To some this may sound petty or picky, but these techniques are very effective. The absence of clocks and windows is one of these practices. It's psychological cheating. Keeping players from knowing what time of day it is or whether it's day or night is an effective way to keep them much longer than they intended.

Liquor

As far as I'm concerned, the biggest legal cheating method is the use of alcohol. Nevada has a gaming law that says in effect, "it's illegal to take unfair advantage or allow an obviously intoxicated individual to gamble." There's little, if any, enforcement of this law. It's a common practice, and I've witnessed time and again a pit boss instructing a cocktail waitress to "freshen" a winning gambler's drink. Not only is the drink fresh, it usually contains more alcohol than previous drinks. Once the winning player becomes intoxicated and loses back the money won plus, it becomes time for the pit boss to notice the player is intoxicated and informs the player it's time to quit. This final reprimand usually comes about the same time the player announces he's temporarily out of money.

Card Counters

For years casinos have allowed the public to believe there's a way to beat the system. Some systems help gamblers cut the percentage the house has on a game, but laws of physics (mathematics) can't be beaten over an extended period of time. But, casinos make a big deal of throwing out card counters, players with adding machines, and other mathematical devices. As of this writing, some creative and space-aged card counters are using small computers hidden in their clothing. These small devices are operated by the counter's toes.

Laws uphold the ejection of a card counter. Here's one reason why. Let's say you're an average gambler with just enough knowledge of blackjack to make the game fun. One day you get a streak of luck that's bigger than you ever dreamed. Every move, unconscious or intentional, works out to your advantage and you're thousands of dollars ahead. The pit boss has the right to have you taken from the table, forcibly if necessary, to a back room where you will be grilled about your gambling practices. Forcing a player in these circumstances to stand naked so casino authorities can check for hidden devices is not unheard of. Once it's determined you aren't a card counter, a feeble apology is offered and you're allowed to return to the table. Your hot streak is over. If you decide to stay, odds are you'll lose back every penny you were ahead, plus the money you brought with you.

There are a few casinos that don't use these tactics at all. Binion's Horseshoe is an example. I was living in Las Vegas during the time the late Binny Binion took on a world famous card counter. Binny was one of the old-time gamblers who would let anyone take a gambling shot at him. Any time and any limit. The card counter always lost.

Faking Winners

Another case of casinos morally cheating the public is faking large winners. Sure, there are big winners at one sitting,

but they're very rare. Those who win big usually come back another day and give it back, plus what they brought with them. When things get slow for the casino business, some casinos will fake a big winner. An example is having a confederate, acting as a tourist, walk into a casino with a briefcase full of money (in reality it's the casino's money). He lays it all on one roll of the dice. If the gambler loses, it's oh well. If the gambler wins, it's out the door with the winnings. A crowd of people saw it, the news media picks up on it, and the public believes it. Sometimes the actual bet was a hundred thousand. Four hours after the fact, word by way of the grapevine has the bet at one million. It's incredible free publicity.

Worthless Tokens

Several casinos offer free gaming tokens as the main ingredient of their advertising campaign. These offers make you feel you're getting a good deal. In reality you're getting next to nothing. It's a deceptive practice. Bob Stupak and his Vegas World Casino was one of the biggest users of this type of advertising. He continually ran into trouble with the Nevada State Gaming Control Board over this practice. If you read magazines or the Sunday paper, you have probably read one of his ads that offer a "virtually free vacation." The operative word is *virtually*.

A typical advertisement for casinos using this practice will offer free gaming tokens that can be used to win large amounts of money. Offering items such as automobiles, fantastic vacations, and other valuable prizes is not uncommon. What these casinos want is for you to assume these tokens can be used throughout the casino. This is rarely the case. Special free tokens are usually used exclusively in one or two specially designated slot machines. These machines are operated free and are not required to comply with gaming regulations for jackpot payoffs. This means it's perfectly legal to rig these machines to pay off once in every ten million pulls. To

some, especially casino operators, this activity is not cheating. To me, and many others, it's trickery. According to Webster, trickery is cheating.

Big Winner, Good-Bye Machine

Not once have I seen or heard of a slot machine being taken out of service because a player lost too much money playing it. On the other hand, watch a customer play a machine and get lucky—lucky enough to empty the machine a few times—and see what happens. The machine is taken out of service. Why? According to slot managers there's a malfunction, and the gaming authority upholds this action.

CHEATING AGAINST MAJOR CASINOS

Cheating against major casinos normally comes from the inside. Usually it's the floor-level employees who cheat, and they rarely cheat the player. It's the house money they're after. The most popular method is to work with a player acting as a confederate. This player will be given several advantages not afforded other players.

Blackjack

At blackjack, the dealer signals to the confederate what the hole card is. This type of signal usually comes as a head nod. When it's the confederate's turn to act, the dealer will give the signal. Chin down if the hole card is seven or higher. A head nod up, the hole card is a ten. A head nod to either side suggests the hole card is six or under. These head nods are very slight and made at the precise moment the dealer and confederate make eye contact.

Other cheating methods used by dealers include making payoffs for more than what was bet and looking the other way if the confederate player caps the bet on hands of 21, 20, or a good double down. If there's a good chance the player

feels a losing hand is imminent, the dealer won't look as the player palms some of the chips that were placed for the bet. Once the confederate has won a sizable, or prearranged amount, the chips are cashed in and the money split later at a designated meeting place.

Craps

Paying a player more than what he's entitled is a popular method of cheating against the house at craps. Leaving a bet when it should have been taken down and paying off "on the fly" are two more popular methods. There are many other ways to cheat the house, but these are the hardest to detect and are the most profitable. Paying off more than what's bet, and leaving losing bets on the table is easy for a dealer and confederate, especially in a fast-moving game. Paying off "on the fly" takes the cooperation of the boxman, dealers, and a confederate. This type of maneuver is extremely profitable.

Betting on the fly is primarily used where there is little activity (head-to-head with the house is the only way most dealers will get involved with this cheat). A full table with loud and active players will also work. During the game, a confederate player will throw a bet on the table, but won't say a word. When the dice have landed, the dealer will pay off as if the player had called the number that is showing. Surveillance can't hear what's being said at the table and can only assume the dealers are paying off on a legitimate bet.

DEALERS VS. PLAYERS

Although most dealers give the gambler a fair shake, there are some who don't, which makes this method of cheating worth mentioning. I know of craps dealers who brag about cheating a gambler who fails to tip. This type of cheating usually comes as a short payoff. For example, a player is supposed to be paid \$250 and the dealer pays \$225. Another

method is to delay calling out the call bet or not calling the bet at all. If the player would have won and asked to be paid, the dealer says, "it was no bet, you were too late," or "I'm sorry, I didn't hear you," If the player would lose the bet, the dealer "hears" the call and takes the money down. In almost all cases when the player beefs, the boxman will back the dealer. Dealers who do this contend that it's proper conduct since casinos pay minimum wage and they depend on the generosity of players to make a decent living. Some dealers even feel it's an obligation of the player to tip. It isn't. There's no excuse for this type of behavior, and if you come across it, don't hesitate to report it to the casino manager. Bypass the pit boss; he may approve of such actions.

SMALL CASINOS

Small casinos on roads leading to major gaming cities are more apt to cheat in one form or another, from the dealers right up to the owners. The reason is survival. Licenses for operating a blackjack table or slot machine are just as expensive for a small joint as they are for a major casino. Most small casinos get very little tourist traffic and aren't often visited by gaming officials. When gaming officials do visit, they stick out like a sore thumb. Any cheating practices going on can be curtailed until the officials leave.

ILLEGAL GAMBLING

Illegal gambling is an enormous industry, from bookies and back room poker tables, to friendship bets on Sunday's football game. Historians note that settlers coming over on the Mayflower played games of chance, only to be admonished by their leaders. Today, every city and town in this country has some form of illegal gambling. Some estimates suggest money changing hands on illegal gambling is 10 times more than money wagered legally.

BUST OUT AND STEER JOINTS

One name given to a house that blatantly cheats is "bust out joint."

Bust out joints are exactly that. A gambler who walks into one of these places can count on leaving in a short time with nothing but his clothes. Further chapters deal with how these joints cheat.

The name "steer joint" also applies to bust out joints. They are so named because people with huge bankrolls and a taste for gambling are actually steered toward them. Most are very sophisticated operations. It takes time, effort, and careful planning to get the mark headed in the right direction. The result is always the same: the mark leaves with his clothes and empty pockets. It's not uncommon for the mark to leave behind expensive pieces of jewelry as collateral for unpaid markers.

"INDIAN GAMING"

Lately, Indian tribes have found that having gaming establishments is not only legal on their land, but very profitable. Many tribes are taking advantage of gaming, with new casinos being built all over the United States. I have visited several of these casinos in California, and they are nice. Treatment of customers is of the highest caliber, and the atmosphere is friendly. I have never seen or heard of any cheating, and dealers are strictly monitored, at least in the casinos I've gambled in.

o

lea
eas
ma
wo
a c

join
You
to a
one
age

form
mak
clea

is al
Som
to a
thro
place

CHEATING WITH CARDS

Just about everyone, including me, has been amazed at least once by someone's ability to manipulate cards. It's not easy to work cards, but with practice just about anyone can master the art. Working for a casino, a good card mechanic is worth 10 times his weight in gold. Working against a casino, a card sharp is trouble with a capital T.

How the average gambler is cheated in casinos, steer joints, and private games will be covered in this chapter. You'll also learn how an excellent card sharp can do the same to a casino. A professional card sharp can cheat almost anyone, including the seasoned player, dealer, and casino managers. The hand is definitely quicker than the eye.

CUTTING FOR HIGH OR LOW

Cutting cards is an example of cheating in its simplest form, yet it's very effective. Even the amateur trickster can make serious money using this trick. I know, I was taken to the cleaners on at least one occasion by someone using this trick.

A slight alteration of a standard deck of 52 playing cards is all it takes. Cards altered for this con are called "strippers." Some novelty shops sell stripper decks, but it's easy enough to alter them privately. First, separate the high cards (10s through aces) from the low cards (deuces through 9s) and place them in individual stacks.

Take the stack of high cards and, gripping them firmly at the ends, use a fine piece of sandpaper and gently sand both sides of the cards. Be sure to grip the cards firmly during the entire sanding process. This will ensure equal and exact sanding of all cards.

Important: Only 1/32 of an inch needs to be removed from each side. Once the sides have been sanded, slightly round off the corners. This will keep a professional look to the cards.

Once the high cards are completed, take the low cards, grip them firmly at the sides, and sand down both ends. Again, remove only 1/32 of an inch from each end. The corners on these cards should be rounded the same as the other cards. When completed correctly, the sanding job is unnoticeable.

When cutting for high card, gently cut by gripping the cards at the ends. This will ensure a high card draw every time. If the game changes to low card, lightly grip the cards on the side. This will ensure a low card every time.

PRIVATE GAMES

Many people I've contacted, concerning gambling, have had bad experiences in private card games. Private card games are held in homes, back rooms of bars, hotel rooms, and sometimes public transportation. Regulations are few, and conditions are ripe for cheating. Levels of cheating and methods of cheating vary with the type and location of the game. A neighborhood card game between people who know each other wouldn't usually be subject to cheating, regardless of the gambling limit. In contrast, a nickel/dime game between strangers in the back room of a bar would, at times, be subject to cheating of one form or another. Low-limit games won't have the sophisticated cheating methods expected in a high-limit game.

SETUP GAME

Finding or starting a high-limit game is sometimes an effort in itself. The most popular with professional cheats is a setup game. This type of game takes careful planning and execution. The ideal setup would be having two or three wealthy businessmen as marks, a dealer, two players, and a setup man.

To get this kind of game takes time. Bait has to be planted for the marks. A time and place have to be negotiated that is convenient for all the marks. When game time arrives, it's a definite payday for the pros.

The card game in the movie *The Sting* is an exaggerated example of the extent some pros will go to form a setup game.

FIXING THE DECK

Marking, shuffling, and dealing cards are essential tools for cheating in a card game. Another valuable tool is getting marked cards into a game so they can be shuffled and dealt. If a player came to a game and placed several open decks of cards on the table, other players would become suspicious. If the same player came to the game and placed several decks of cards on the table still in the manufacturer's cellophane, players would think these cards were legit. Not always so. Cards marked prior to the game can look as though they came direct from the factory.

Some novelty shops sell cards that have been pre-marked at the factory. Most professional card sharps prefer to mark their own. Cards purchased at a novelty store don't usually match the looks or feel of professional cards. Professional cards are those manufactured by companies such as Bee or Bicycle. Professional cheats mark their own cards primarily because it reflects their individual preference and it's cheaper.

Removal of Cards

NOTICE: A clean and obstacle-free area is required. I also advise wearing surgical (latex) gloves throughout the operation.

A small letter opener is the best tool to use when removing the cellophane from a new deck of cards. Carefully insert and slowly slide the opener all the way along the seam. If you use extreme care, the cellophane will separate without being damaged. Slowly insert the opener and with a light cutting action work the opener back and forth. Use slight pressure toward the opening side of the cellophane. Gently work the opener along the edge as the cellophane opens.

Once the seam is opened, gently hold the deck by the sides with two fingers and lightly shake the deck up and down until the box falls from the cellophane. *CAUTION: As the deck slides from the cellophane, don't squeeze the cellophane. This is to prevent crimping, bending, or wrinkling the cellophane.*

Using a sharp knife (preferably a draftsman's scalpel) or a razor, carefully cut inside the seam on the side of the box. Cut exactly where the flaps are glued together.

Once the side of the box is open, carefully tip the box and let the cards slide out. The cards are new and slippery, be careful to not allow them to fall on the floor.

It is extremely important to remember the position of all contents. All cards, including jokers and advertising paraphernalia, will have to be placed back in the box exactly as they were taken out before the cards were altered. There are many players who know exactly what order the cards are in when they are packaged at the manufacturing plant. The cards are ready to be marked.

Important: Use caution during the card-marking process. Don't handle the cards unnecessarily. Don't bend the cards in any manner. Use surgical gloves throughout the marking process.

Replacing the Cards

When returning the cards to the box, slide them in carefully.

There will usually be small pieces of "card dust," which look like lint, that fell from the box when the cards were first taken out. Sprinkle these pieces back into the box once the cards are in. This adds even more authenticity to the cards. There will always be one player who'll make a comment like, "Hey, you can tell these are really new." While making the comment, the player will be pointing to or playing with those pieces of "lint."

After carefully placing the cards back in the box, fold the inside portion of the side flap in. Using Elmer's glue, spread a very thin coat on the inside flap. Allow the glue to dry for about two minutes. Fold the outer flap onto the glued inside flap. If a portion of the glue squeezes out along the edge, use a slightly damp cotton cloth to gently wipe the glue away. *Important: Do not use tissue paper or paper towels.* Why? The fibers might stick to the glue and be seen, and they tend to smear and smudge.

Place the box on the side of the newly glued flap and balance a small, heavy object on the top side. Leave the box in this position for at least two hours.

Next, making sure the top of the box goes first, gently slide the box back into the cellophane wrapper. *Important: Go slow and use caution. Keep from damaging the cellophane in any manner.* Should the cellophane become bent or damaged in any way, it's ruined.

Carefully fold the inside portion of the cellophane flap closed. Use a clear epoxy glue and place a few drops on the inside flap. Two or three tiny drops are all that's needed; any more will smear the cellophane. Immediately and gently fold the outside flap onto the inside flap. Hold the closed flap down for about 10 seconds.

When completed, the box should look exactly like it came from the factory and is ready to be introduced into a game.

INTRODUCING MARKED CARDS INTO A GAME

One way to introduce marked decks into a game is to

bring them to the game and set them on the table. Do this prior to any games getting started. "I just stopped by the store and picked up a few decks in case we need them," is an example of how to let players know there are fresh cards available. This method allows other players or dealers to introduce your cards into the game themselves. Should the individual having the marked decks be the host of the game, the cards can be placed with other fresh decks and introduced as the game progresses.

True professionals have patience and sense enough not to become greedy. Suspicion runs deep when one player wins a majority of pots all night long. Winning a few good pots each hour of play is more than enough to take the lion's share of winnings home. There are exceptions. When a setup is made to fleece a specific mark, all is fair. The idea is to take as much money as possible from the mark in the shortest time.

MARKING THE CARDS

I remember playing Old Maid with my friends as a kid. After a few sessions the cards became dog-eared, bent, and some of the cards were torn. Everyone who belonged to the group knew which card was the maid. When a new member to the group joined in, there were laughs and giggles when the new kid got the old maid. Card cheats like to have the same advantage. That's knowing the identity of cards during play.

There are numerous ways to mark cards, some very efficient, and some not so efficient. One popular method is to mark the backs of cards so the suit and value can be identified. There are manufacturers who make marked cards, packaged and ready to go, with a sheet of instructions telling the buyer what to look for. Professionals like to mark their own. It's kind of a self-image thing, like signing a painting.

The Rub Out

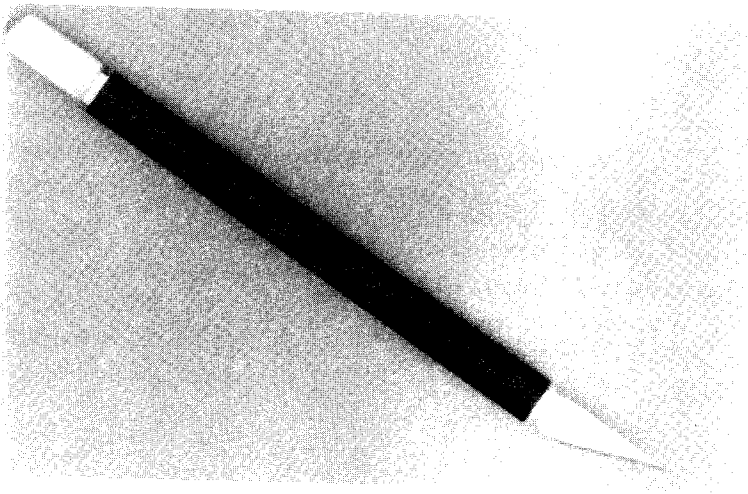
The "rub out" is one of the better methods. It takes time and patience to mark cards using this technique, but it is well worth the effort. Some experts ruin several decks of cards before achieving the desired results.

Backs of cards are often elaborate, and a manufacturer's identity can be determined by merely looking at the design, Bicycle being the most famous, Bee being not far behind.

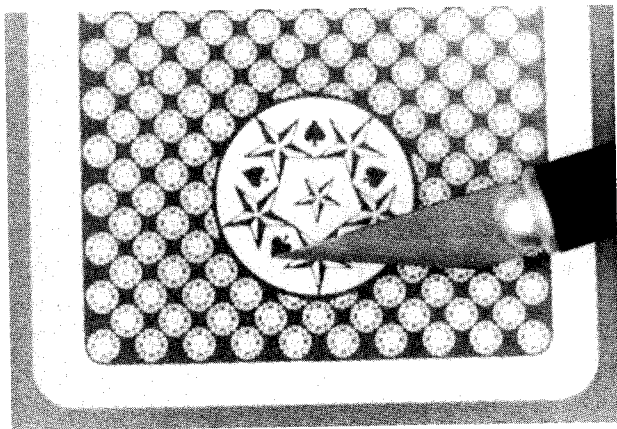
NOTICE: KEM playing cards are used by most major card rooms. Why card rooms choose these cards goes beyond their excellent quality. KEM cards are plastic and difficult to permanently damage by bending, warping, or getting wet. When bent they return to their original shape almost immediately. When KEM cards have been altered, they are easy to spot. It's very rare to see KEM cards used in games where cheating tactics are used.

In the first photo above, the scalpel is pointing to the design that will be removed. In the following photo, the design has been removed.

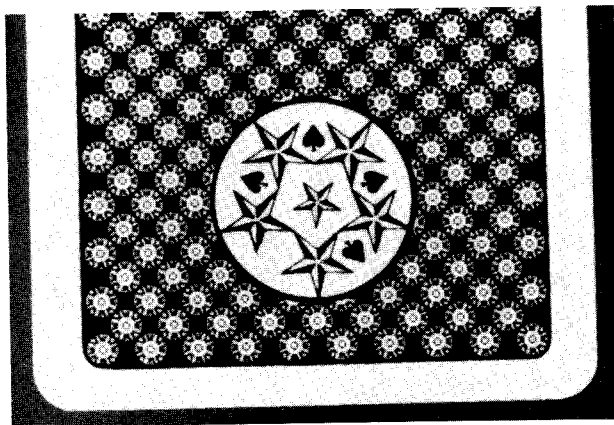
Removing a design must be done very lightly so the area



An excellent tool to use for a rub out is a draftsman's scalpel.



The design of the card can be altered by lightly scratching over an inked area.



being rubbed will stay flat and firm and does not become rough. Most professional cards have a glossy finish. The glossy finish is also removed along with the design. This leaves a flat look and is easily detected. To replace the glossy look, use a small amount of clear wax shoe polish. Rub a very small amount of polish over the dull spot. Allow the polish to dry a few minutes, then lightly rub to a shine with a clean, dry, cotton cloth. One application will usually bring back the glossy look. If not, repeat the procedure.

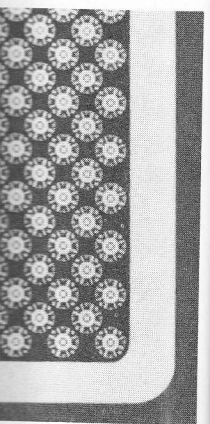
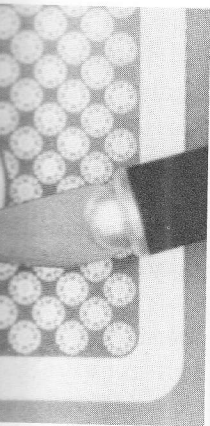
Many professionals will make slight changes to different

valued
card as
the de
while
remova
Remov
detail o
by a qu
their c
remova

The
method
any nu
designs
various
cooked

Lin
remove
do this
color dy
color on
paper o
will go.
spot ap
method

The
Instead
remove
The mo
get the
on the c



es not become
sy finish. The
e design. This
lace the glossy
ish. Rub a very
w the polish to
e with a clean,
bring back the
es to different

valued cards. Removal of one small design might signify the card as an ace. On cards manufactured by Bicycle, removal of the detail in one of the angel's wings could signify an ace, while the removal of the detail in the angel's wing and removal of the detail in the chest area could signify a king. Removal of the detail in the angel's wing, chest area, and the detail on the angel's head (making her look bald) could signify a queen. Because of the great detail manufacturers place on their cards, there are endless possibilities to what design removal cheats can use to identify the value and suits of cards.

There are many other ways to mark cards using this method. Professional cheats use their imagination to design any number of patterns. As previously stated, separate designs are trademark signatures of some pros. Years ago, various pros could be linked to the marked designs on crooked decks.

Line Work

Line work is just the opposite of rub outs. Rather than remove spots or designs, line work adds designs to cards. To do this properly, continual experimenting with mixtures of color dye and water will result in a color exactly matching the color on the cards. On glossy cards, a very fine piece of sandpaper can be used to lightly buff the area where the design will go. This will allow the ink to adhere to the card. If a dull spot appears after the ink has dried, the clear shoe polish method will work to repair the dull spot.

Color Out

The color out works on the same principle as the rub out. Instead of removing a design by rubbing it off, the design is removed by using a color matching the color on the cards. The most popular color dye is white. The same care is used to get the exact shade of white as to get any other color. Designs on the cards can be eliminated with the white dye. White dye

is commonplace and is found on the backs of most decks. It is also harder to detect.

Trimming

Trimming cards is a method used to make some of the cards look as if they were printed off the center. This work is best accomplished with the use of a paper cutter. Some cheats will alter various high cards, whereas others will alter all of one suit.

Separate the cards to be identified. Trim exactly 1/16 of an inch off one side of each card. The remainder of the cards will have both sides trimmed, each side trimmed exactly 1/32 of an inch. The end result will be that all the cards are the same size. The difference will be that the identifiable ones look off-center. Many professionals will use a corner trimmer (used to trim the corners of pictures used in ID cards) to trim the corners of all 52 cards once the edges have been trimmed.

Detecting Trimmed Cards

Elaborate patterns on playing cards make marking cards easy and very difficult to detect. I know of only one sure method to detect cards marked this way. Place the entire deck in front of you and hold down one end. While staring at the deck, fan the other end in a riffle motion. Any motion on the design signals an alteration. It's the same method artists use to make cartoon characters move.

Daubing

I consider daubing a poor method of cheating, but surprisingly enough, many cheats use this method. A small sponge is saturated with colored ink. During the game the cheat will lightly press the sponge, or a finger that has just touched the sponge, against the card. This will color-mark the card so the cheat can identify it during the game. Some cheats prefer to hide the dauber in a shirt pocket for easy access

decks. It is

ome of the
his work is
ome cheats
alter all of

tly 1/16 of
of the cards
ed exactly
e cards are
fiable ones
er trimmer
ds) to trim
trimmed.

king cards
y one sure
entire deck
ring at the
ion on the
artists use

g, but sur-
d. A small
game the
at has just
r-mark the
ome cheats
asy access

when it's time to mark a card. Ink on the cheat's finger, or dauber, will be transferred to the card. It doesn't take a lot of imagination to realize the finger method is a poor maneuver. Should someone in the game, other than a confederate, notice the cards are marked, it could spell disaster. The cheat can be easily identified by the inky fingers.

A Short Story

Three-fingered Willie was one such card cheat. Willie wasn't much good at anything, which is probably why he attempted to make his living cheating. Willie heard of the daubing method and one evening, during a poker game, Willie decided to make a move. Willie decided to mark the aces. The first ace was marked with the blue ink Willie had on his sponge. The second, third, and fourth were marked shortly after. Willie's operation fell into trouble soon after he marked the cards. The ink Willie used was blue. The cards were red. The amount of ink Willie used not only marked the cards' edges, but a portion of the backs and faces as well. Other problems for Willie included ink on his fingers and ink that soaked through his shirt pocket. A couple of the players had no sense of humor. The punishment they decided to give Willie for cheating was removal of the two fingers covered with ink. Prior to this incident, Willie was just plain Willie.

Invisible Ink

Using invisible ink is a popular method of marking cards, and one I consider to be very good. The type of invisible ink used for this cheat doesn't disappear after a short period of time, it stays on the cards permanently, is very hard to detect with the naked eye, and is found in novelty stores. There are two popular colors. One ink has a blue tint, the other a green tint. A cheat can write the value of each card on their backs and, with the use of tinted glasses, can see the value of each card during play. Novelty stores sell magic glasses that detect

the marks made by invisible ink. The truth is, there isn't any magic to the glasses. Any red-colored lenses will detect the green ink, and any yellow-tinted glasses will detect the blue ink. Many card rooms have totally banned the wearing of red- or yellow-tinted glasses.

Luminous Readers

Some manufacturers of marked cards produce what is called luminous readers. These cards are marked with an invisible ink at the factory. The value and suit of each individual card is inlaid on its back. All the cheat has to do is wear red-tinted glasses and the value of each card in the deck is revealed. Luminous readers can be purchased in most novelty stores. There are two ways to avoid being taken in a game using luminous readers, or any other game using an invisible ink. One, don't play in a game with players wearing red- or yellow-tinted glasses. Two, if you must play, bring your own tinted glasses.

Single-Ply Cards

Some hosts introduce into their game a cheap brand of playing card that is single-ply. They are very thin, and when the lighting is just right, the player sitting opposite a player using these cards can see through and read the cards' value. This is similar to thin summer dresses some women wear. They hide their body until the sunlight hits just right, then the dress becomes see-through. Games that use these types of cards are not very professional; they are used mainly for children's play.

Shading

There are two different types of shading. In some circles it's marking cards with ink the same color, only a shade lighter or darker than the manufacturer's ink. This method of marking can be compared with line work and color out.

"Shading" is a term given to cards that are slightly lighter or darker than the rest of the deck. To an amateur this type of marking will go completely unnoticed. The easy way to shade cards is to put them on a window sill and let the sun slightly bleach the color.

A popular use of shaded cards is to identify suits. A pro can shade all four suits by adding four slightly different shades. Shading can also be used to identify cards of different value.

Another shading method is done accidentally by the manufacturer. On any given day, the batch of dye made at the card plant can differ slightly from another batch of dye made on a different day. This means decks printed on one day may vary slightly in shade from a deck printed on another day. Going to different stores and buying decks from the same manufacturer is one way of finding cards of different shades. Some professionals will go to stores in different towns and gather several decks. The cards from one deck can be compared to cards from other decks, and so on.

Sanding

Sanding can be best described by using the example of cards that have been used for a period of time. The sides become dark. If one of the cards has to be taken out of play and replaced with a new one, the white edge of the new card will stand out. The edge of the new card appears as a white line in the deck.

This is the same principal cheats use when they lightly sand the edges of cards. Sanding only works on cards that have been in play for a while and is a practice reserved for amateurs.

Pegging/Blistering

The terms "pegging" and "blistering" mean the same thing.

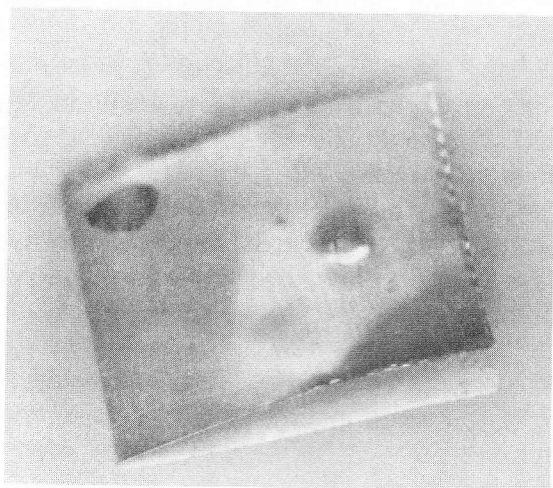
The photo below shows a completed pegger. The diagram represents a card altered with a pegger. Note that the bump is placed just above the card value.

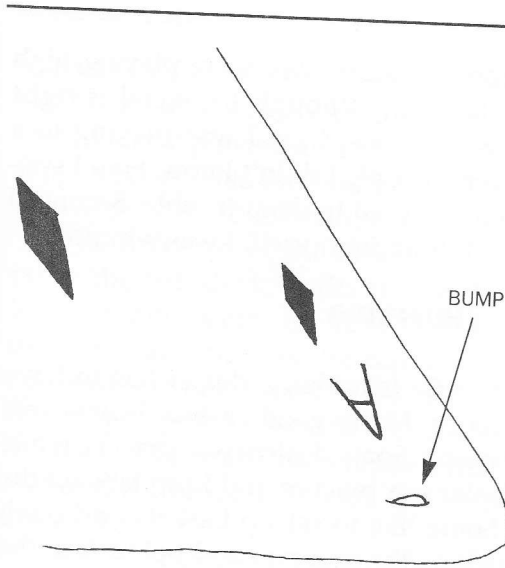
A dealer's identification of cards is the major advantage in this practice. As the dealer deals, he can feel the bumps with his thumb. Depending on the placement and number of bumps, the dealer knows the value of the card. The dealer now has the option of dealing the card in turn or holding it back and dealing it to someone else.

Cutouts

Another method used to identify cards is called a cut out. This is used primarily when the dealer deals and does not play. Tiny, thin cuts are placed on the face of the card. Just prior to dealing the card, the dealer can push the card out slightly with the thumb. With the index finger, the dealer can feel the mark and identify the card's value. Now the dealer can make the decision whether to deal the card in turn or hold it back. Knowing what each player has will allow the dealer to signal confederates.

Pegging/blistering is placing tiny bumps on cards. Professionals use an improvised tool called a "pegger." To make a pegger, bend a small strip of sheet metal in half. Use a dull nail and a hammer to place an indentation in the sheet metal.





Perforating

Perforating the cards is another amateur card cheat. This method is similar to pegging and blistering. Marking cards in this manner takes place during the game rather than before. Using a needle or other sharp object, the cheat

pokes tiny holes near the edges of the cards. Even a player with little experience can notice this scheme.

Clipping

Clipping is the use of a fingernail to "clip" the edge of a card. This practice is easily noticed by good players. During play, a player will use the edge of a sharp fingernail to slice a tiny notch in the edge of a card. The notches can be placed in various positions to designate the value of the cards.

Bending

Bending cards is not an uncommon method of cheating. Players bend a card to identify it. Dealers bend cards to force a cut. The bend may be a tiny dog-ear or a crimp in the middle. A card that's bent in the middle will stand out while lying on the playing surface, and won't be quite as obvious as a dog-eared bend.

During a game I was playing, someone bent the ace of spades every time a new deck was introduced. It's possible

the ace of spades was chosen because we were playing high card in the hole splits the pot. Although I noticed it right away, I kept quiet for two reasons. One, I was playing in a strange bar and with several people I didn't know. Had I spoken up, I might have found myself in deep trouble. Second, I didn't want to ruin a good thing for myself. I was winning.

SHUFFLING

To acquire a smooth riffle (shuffle), a dealer has to have hours and hours of practice. Many good casino dealers will even practice on their days off. Some dealers will practice while watching TV. A good dealer can practice and keep tabs on the program, no problem. Some like to set up baskets and pitch cards at them while watching the program and not look at the basket. A dealer who's proficient at pitching cards can put 52 cards in a small basket with ease, and in just a few seconds.

A standard shuffle used by legit professional dealers is a riffle, riffle, strip, riffle, cut. Done properly, this method will give cards an excellent shuffle. Next time you're in a card room, watch the dealers. You'll see the action firsthand.

False Shuffle

The object behind the false shuffle is to make it appear an honest shuffle is taking place (but really isn't). The dealer riffles, strips, and cuts the cards. There's lots of action and hand movement, but not one card has changed position. To the players, this action looks honest, and they are eager to play.

False shuffling allows the desired cards to remain where the dealer wants them. Over the course of an evening, an excellent player will be happy winning two or three large pots per hour. A dealer placing winning hands to a confederate player five or six times an hour will ensure that player will walk away with a majority of the money, every time.

A few years ago, a few poker dealers in a major Las Vegas

tournament were caught using false shuffles. Several card rooms immediately adopted a new method of shuffling that would allow players a full view of the deck during the shuffling process. This method was called the TB shuffle (the initials of the card room manager who introduced it).

The first part of the false shuffle is the riffle. The dealer takes the full deck, splits it in half, brings the two halves together, and begins the riffle. Immediately following the riffle, the dealer pushes the cards all the way through so the edges of one half extend beyond the other half. The dealer's fingers grasp the extended edges and pull the cards through the deck. The dealer then repeats the riffling sequence. These moves must be done quickly and smoothly. Hours of practice are the key.

The next move is called stripping the deck. What the dealer is supposed to do is pull portions of cards off the deck, changing the position of the cards.

The dealer moves his hands as if the cards are being stripped, but none of the cards are changing position. The dealer cuts the cards, placing the portion *not* to be dealt back on top. The cards are placed on top of the others, slightly off center. This identifies the exact spot the cut will be made. The dealer moves his hands away from the deck, pauses, and then cuts the deck for all players to see.

Had this been an honest shuffle the cut would have ended up vice versa. In a card room setting, false shuffles and dealing seconds are about all a dishonest dealer can constantly get away with.

Private or back room games are another story. These games aren't monitored by surveillance cameras, floor men, and other dealers. Unless a game is being played for extremely high stakes and the players want a professional dealer, most games are played by passing the deal. Each player gets to deal in turn and this is where the card sharp excels.

THE PICK AND SORT

Without the use of marked cards, a dealer can't cheat, because the identity of the cards being used is not known. At the end of a hand the dealer will pick and sort cards laying face up, and group together the cards to be dealt to himself or a confederate. This may sound like it takes a long time, but a pro can pick and sort in less than two seconds. Keeping this in mind, one of the things to look for during a game is a dealer who picks and sorts the cards before gathering them together for the shuffle.

The following is an example of how pick and sort works. The dealer has decided to deal himself three aces. In less than two seconds the dealer has found three aces, and they are on the top of the deck.

Using the false shuffle method, the dealer can keep the three aces on the top of the deck during the entire shuffle. The dealer begins the deal by dealing seconds, keeping the top three cards in place.

When it's the dealer's turn to receive a card, the dealer gets the top card, and dealing seconds begins again. This process is repeated twice more. When the hand is completely dealt, the dealer will have three aces.

I watched a player use a tactic that keeps dealers from picking and sorting. When the hand was over, and the pot had been awarded to the winner, this player would immediately turn over the exposed cards and give the entire deck a quick scramble.

CUTTING THE DECK

In games using a permanent dealer, the dealer will always do the cutting. In games where the deal is passed, the cut is customarily made by the player to the immediate right of the dealer. If the player to do the cutting is not a confederate, and

the dealer intends to cheat, the dealer must void the cut made by the player.

Voiding the Cut

One method to void another player's cut is to crimp cards. Usually the dealer will crimp the bottom two or three cards. Once this has been accomplished, the dealer will give the cards one more cut. When the cards are placed in front of the player for cutting, it's hopeful the crimped cards will influence the cut, meaning the player cutting will make the cut at the crimp.

Another method to void a cut is switching the cut. This slight of hand is difficult unless practiced. What the dealer will do is pick up the deck one half at a time and place them together as if it were a genuine cut, but will then leave the top half of the deck slightly off center.

As the deck is being placed together, the dealer will slide the little finger of the deck hand between the deck halves. As the deck hand is raised to deal, the dealer will wrap the fingers of the deck hand around the top half of the deck. In one smooth motion the fingers will pull the cards off the top and slide them under the bottom. This entire motion happens in less than the blink of an eye. Professionals using this tactic practice every day. Just a few days off from using this maneuver can spell disaster during a game.

DEALING

Once the cards have been marked and introduced into the game, they have to make their way to the players. Dealing is the method to get cards to the players.

It can't be said enough: To effectively master the art of cheating takes hours upon hours of practice. People who have attempted to cheat using methods explained in this book, without practice, have ended up in some rather embarrassing situations.

Cold Deck

Dealing using a cold deck is one of the slickest and best money-making moves card cheats make. Introducing the cold deck is the highlight of a setup game, a game in which a mark has been invited to play and is now about to be fleeced. A cold deck, sometimes referred to as a cooler, is a deck of cards that has been arranged prior to being introduced into the game. The cards are fixed to give the mark a very good hand. The only problem for the mark is that someone at the table will have a better one. Under these circumstances the usual hand given to a mark is four of a kind. One of the confederate players will get a straight flush. I've seen this play on several occasions. It's really something, watching the various expressions a mark makes as the hand keeps getting better and better. Many marks get so excited they can't get their money in the pot fast enough. On occasion the mark will get so excited that the money he brought to the game won't be enough. At this point the mark is usually willing to sign a promissory note for more money. The real excitement comes when the mark finds out the hand he's holding is second best. The expressions, mannerisms, and crazy noises are so outrageous it's hard to keep from laughing.

It's very easy to set up a cold deck. The most important thing is to remember the exact position the mark will be in when the cold deck is introduced to the game. It would be a sad evening for the person setting up the cold deck if the mark got the high hand.

For the purposes of demonstrating how to fix a cold deck, we'll pretend this is a five-card draw game. A setup game with three wealthy marks, a confederate player, and crooked dealer. The setup man is in another room fixing the cold deck. Players one and two are marks. Player three is the confederate, and player four is the third mark. The dealer is player number five. The hands are: player one, aces full; player two, kings full; player three, an eight-high

straight flush; player four gets four jacks; and the dealer will have whatever is dealt.

Counting starts with the first player left of the dealer. The setup man, who is in the other room, will place the following cards face up and on top of each other: ace, king, four of spades, jack, any card, ace, king, five of spades, jack, any card, ace, king, six of spades, jack, any card. To keep the marks from thinking the game is fixed, the next 10 cards will be throw-away cards. This means the next two cards the players get will be nothing and each player will end up drawing two cards. After 10 no-count cards have been counted out and placed on the stack, the next 10 cards will be as follows: deuce, three, seven of spades, jack, any no-count card, deuce, three, eight of spades, and any no-count card. The remainder of the deck is placed on the pile and the deck is ready. Let the game begin!

There are several ways a cold deck can be introduced into the game.

One is to cut the legitimate deck, and just before the dealer picks up the deck to deal, he sneezes loudly. Reaching into a jacket pocket to get a handkerchief, the dealer pulls out the cold deck, which is concealed in the handkerchief. The switch is swiftly made with the old deck going into the handkerchief. Another player can also distract the mark at that moment by asking for a light, or for some other valid reason. Another method is to have a confederate player next to the dealer hold the cold deck. When the dealer offers the player the deck to cut, the player makes the switch. Again, it's a good idea to distract the mark during this process.

Dealing From the Bottom

Dealing from the bottom of the deck is as old as cards themselves. At one time it was the most popular method of cheating in private games. In today's environment the use of bottom dealing is almost extinct. This is because of the cut

card. The cut card has been introduced into card games for two reasons: to keep the bottom card from being exposed during the game and to prevent the dealer from dealing from the bottom. The card is usually made of a hard plastic and is thicker than the playing cards. Several manufacturers are now including cut cards with their new decks.

To deal from the bottom, the dealer uses the little finger of the dealing hand to push the bottom card forward. As the dealer begins to deal, the index finger of the dealing hand will pull the bottom card out. Once the card is out, the dealer will pinch the card with the index finger and thumb and pitch it to the intended player. The entire move takes only a split second to perform.

Dealing Seconds

Dealing seconds is now the most popular method of cheating while dealing. I've heard some people mistakenly explain that dealing seconds was somehow placing discards back in the deck and dealing them out again during the same hand. The term "dealing seconds" comes from a dealer's ability to deal the second card in the deck as opposed to the top card. A mechanic can deal the second card as fast and as smooth as the top card. It is almost impossible to see. About the only way to catch a pro dealing seconds is to catch the move on camera. Even then it takes a good surveillance operator several runs of the tape in slow motion to catch it. The mechanic can also deal almost any card from the deck, at any given time, in the same manner. Dealing a third, fourth, or more card from the top is still called dealing seconds. It would seem reasonable that if the dealer dealt the third card in the deck, it would be called dealing thirds, but it's not.

One reason for dealing seconds is to give a designated player cards needed to make a winning hand. It's also used to keep other players from getting cards needed to make a winning hand. Knowing how to deal seconds is not enough.

A pro dealer must also have thorough knowledge of the game, knowledge of the players, and complete observation of what's happening in the game. A top-notch mechanic will use the method of dealing seconds well before resorting to dealing with marked cards, especially in a high-stakes game. The chance of being caught dealing seconds is almost nil, whereas chances of getting caught with marked cards is much higher.

Peeking

When dealing seconds without the use of marked cards, a dealer has to know which cards are about to be dealt. To do this, the dealer uses a method called "peeking." Peeking is a method that takes place while the game is in progress. One method of peeking is called a "top peek." The dealer is going to take a look at the top card. To do this, the dealer will take the deck hand and bend it slightly down toward the top of the table. Using the thumb of the dealing hand, the dealer pulls the top card back just enough to expose the left corner of the card. After peeking, the dealer pushes the card back with the thumb. The entire motion takes a fraction of a second. The dealer will sometimes take a peak at more than one of the cards. An example would be the dealer who wants to know what the third card in the deck would be, so the dealer would use the thumb to pull back three cards instead of one.

A reason the dealer would want to know what the third card might be, for example, would be if the third player to receive a card has a flush draw showing. The first player is the dealer's confederate and has signaled he has a straight. Knowing a flush beats a straight, the dealer doesn't want to give the third player the card needed to fill the flush. Should the dealer see the third card is not the card needed to make the flush, the dealer will continue without dealing a second. If the dealer peeks and sees the card is one that's needed, the dealer will have to take a quick peek at the second and top cards. Time is limited and a dealer doesn't have time to peek

at every card, so on the rare occasion that all three cards are ones that will complete the flush, the third player gets the flush. The dealer can only signal the confederate to fold.

Some dealers like what is known as a "back door peek." This is not a very good move for the simple reason it's easy for other players to spot. The back door peek is similar in method to the top peek. The difference is the thumb is used to lift the cards rather than pull them.

Player Peek

Many times a dealer will want to show a confederate what the next card will be. There are many instances when dealers and confederate players will act together in a card room game of Texas Hold 'Em, and this is probably the only cheat players can continually use and not get caught doing it. The ideal situation is for the confederate player to sit to the immediate right of the dealer, if the dealer is right-handed. Slightly pulling on the two top cards with the thumb will expose the next card to be dealt. The second card is exposed because in card room games the top card is always the *burn* card.

SIGNALS

Signals aren't worth bothering with if they haven't been organized and practiced prior to a game. Signals between a dealer and a player, and player to player, are very effective if done properly.

Dealer to Player

Head nods are the best signals from a dealer to a player. It is very rare, unprofessional, and stupid for a dealer to give information by talking. Cameras watch a dealer's hands but rarely watch the dealer's head. Head nods should be quick. The signal is made only at the first point of eye contact between the dealer and confederate. In a poker game, it's

very easy for the dealer to see the hands of the players to the immediate right or immediate left. For example, the player to the immediate right of the dealer is betting and acting as though he has a flush. A head nod to a confederate could mean the player does have the flush. A slight head motion to the left means no flush, and a head motion to the left and right means the hand is higher than a flush. A quick head motion of 1/4 inch is enough. It's almost like a nervous twitch. There are many other ways to signal and just as many different meanings. It is sometimes best to form your own by using your imagination.

Player to Dealer

The need for a player to signal the dealer is rather limited. Prearranged hand signals from the player could designate a certain value or suit the player needs. The dealer could peek at the first few cards and see if dealing seconds would be in order.

Player to Player

This is the most widely used cheat in all of poker. Signals are used to tell one another the strength or weakness of hands. There are signals to trap another player and signals identifying the value of another player's hand. Players who are confederates and who sit next to each other signal under the table with leg taps, finger pokes, and elbow jabs. Whispering is a method used by amateurs and it's easily detected by others around the table.

Sometimes a player purposely exposes cards during the process of discarding a hand. This is done to show a confederate player the card he or another player may need.

There are as many signals as imaginations can come up with. The way to use them undetected is to practice together with a confederate. Professional cheats will meet in bathrooms to discuss changes in signals or discuss different strategies during the course of the game.

BLACKJACK

If there's one game familiar to almost everyone, it's blackjack. It's popular with both men and women. There are hundreds of books written about how to win at blackjack honestly, but there's no such thing as winning consistently at blackjack and doing it honestly. The bottom line is, there are only ways to increase the odds of not losing as much. There is no sure system that will win at any game where the mathematical odds are in the house's favor. NONE! It's impossible. Las Vegas has spent untold millions in advertising, brainwashing the public with pictures of people winning against the odds. Hollywood does its part by making movies where the entire plot centers around someone beating the system. In reality, it can't be done. There are some people who do walk away with winnings. The only true winners I know of are those players who are lucky enough to win the first time and never play again.

A Short Story

I've told this story on myself numerous times. Luck was smiling on me that day, or I would have spent time in jail. While living in Las Vegas, two associates and I decided to go gambling together. We went to a casino called Foxy's Firehouse, a place no longer in operation that was across the street from the Sahara. Our luck was excellent, and we were all betting the limit, which was a whopping \$25 a hand. On this one particular hand, an associate and I both had hands totaling 15 (a face card and a five). As the dealer turned to the first player, my friend turned and whispered, "Let's switch cards." Without hesitation we did it: we slid each other a card. The dealer caught us and immediately began bellowing for the floor man. The floor man arrived and was told what happened. Of course we both denied any such action took place. The floor man instructed the dealer to turn over our

cards. To everyone's surprise, especially us, we were both holding hands totaling 15 (we had switched fives). The floor man shook his head and walked away.

Card Counters

There's been lots of hullabaloo about card counters, casinos banning card counters, and card counters suing casinos over being ejected. It's nothing more than another scheme by casinos, making people think there really is a system to win. All counting cards does for the player is increase the chances of getting a winning hand and lowering the odds for the house. No matter what happens, and no matter how much is sliced off the house's odds, the house always has the winning percentage over the long run.

Counting cards works this way. Concentrating on the game and keeping track of the cards already played, the counter has a good idea of what cards are left in the deck. If a number of low cards have been played, the deck will be rich in high cards. This gives the counter a better chance of beating or tying the dealer. This is a very simplified version of how counting works, but it's a good illustration. This is what people who believe in card counters fail to tell you. The counter may know there are lots of high or low cards left to be played but doesn't know the order in which they will come. Unless the counter has X-ray vision, it still spells "loser."

The house has various options to offset the meager advantage the counter has. Dealing from the shoe containing four decks of cards is a big one. Where single decks are used, the house can have the dealer shuffle after every hand. This method not only stops a counter from having an advantage, but increases the odds for the house. Again, the idea that card counting is a surefire way to beat the house, is nothing more than a myth.

Top Card Peeks and Dealer Cheats

To say this cheat works well in blackjack games would be an understatement. This is the Cadillac of blackjack cheating, the nut crusher, and the blackjack cheat most feared by a casino. For a confederate player and a cheating dealer, nothing can stand in the way of making money except getting caught. It is almost impossible to get caught at this cheat, when it's done right.

To make this cheat work, the dealer has to be proficient in dealing seconds, peeking, and signaling to the confederate player. The main reason this cheat works so well is that casinos are now dealing players' cards face up. This is to keep players from touching the cards, but knowing the players' card count is what makes this cheat work.

The ideal place for the confederate to sit is third base (last player to act). This gives the dealer ample opportunity to peek at various cards before dealing to the confederate. When it becomes the confederate's turn to act, all a confederate has to do is watch for head signals from the dealer. Through head signals the dealer is going to tell the player to either take a hit or stand. The dealer knows what the player's total is, and the dealer knows what the next two or three cards are in the deck. If the player has 12, and the dealer's second card is a 9, the dealer deals a second and, bingo, the player has 21. Another scenario would be the player having a count of 10 and the dealer knows his count is less than 17. The dealer will signal the player to double down. No matter what the player catches, the dealer will deal himself a busting hand.

In many cases the dealer knows where a 10-count card or ace is in the deck. On the first round the confederate catches a 10. The next card the player catches is an ace. Just 20 minutes at a \$100-and-up table spells an easy 10- or 20-thousand-dollar winner, and if you can believe it, this cheat gets even better. This cheat can only take place if the dealer is dealing from the hand. A shoe nullifies this cheat. Guess where it's com-

mon to see a dealer dealing from the hand. You're right: the \$100 and higher tables.

Palming

Palming cards in a blackjack game used to be an effective way for players to cheat the house. Today, none of the major establishments I know of allow players to touch the cards; the dealer does it all. To cheat by palming cards, a player would have to be in a private game, or in a smaller casino allowing players to look, hold, and motion with the cards.

Most private games use standard playing cards manufactured by Bicycle or Bee, which can be easily obtained at most stores. Prior to attending a private game a sharp will open several decks of cards from different manufacturers and remove the face cards and aces. These are what the cheat will take to the game. Upon arrival, the cheat will notice what type of cards are being used and can place the proper cards in the desired pocket, sleeve, or other comfortable hiding place.

At various times during the course of the game, the sharp can palm an undesired card and replace it with a card needed to make 20 or 21.

Capping

Capping and palming chips used to be an effective way to beat the house. The same thing applies to capping as it does to palming. Players' hands aren't allowed near the chips or cards once the dealer begins to deal. In private games where players are allowed to hold their cards, capping and palming are very effective ways to increase or decrease the original bet.

Once the player has looked at the hand, a decision can be made to cup or palm the chips. If the player had a solid 20, the correct action would be to cap the bet (add more chips to the bet). To do this, a player palms the chips to be added and deposits them on top of the bet as the cards are placed back on the table.

This action is one complete, fast, and fluid motion. Should the player see the hand being a possible loser, the player can take the opposite action and remove chips from the original bet. To do this, the player places the cards next to the bet. Immediately after releasing the cards, the player palms a portion of the chips as the hand passes over the bet.

The best move on a poker pot by a dealer is palming chips from the pot. When all the bets are placed, the dealer will drag all the money into the center of the table. As this is being done, the dealer can palm several chips and deposit them on his own stack.

These actions should be practiced before attempting them during actual play. A mistake while performing this type of cheat could spell disaster.

Dealing Seconds

Dealing seconds works well in blackjack. A dealer can give a confederate blackjack several times in 20 minutes. (Twenty minutes is the standard period of time a dealer will deal at any table.) Dealing seconds in blackjack uses the same methods explained earlier in the chapter.

Some players who are in with dealers follow the dealer to different tables. This practice has to be done with caution. Pit bosses observe players who travel about. It's wise to follow a dealer to every other table.

POKER

The term "four flusher" is said to have originated from poker. To many people it means a cheat or swindler. In poker, it's a player who draws to a four-card flush and doesn't catch. The card caught is the same color as the four-flush suit, such as a player drawing to four clubs receiving a spade instead of the needed club. When it's time to show the best hand, this player might say, "I got a flush." In many cases the

other players throw in their hands, not even looking at the flush. This is what the cheat is banking on. In some cases other players may want to see it. If that happens, the cheat will lay down the hand with all four clubs showing and a portion of the fifth card, the spade, which will be revealed just enough to allow the players to see that it's a black card. If no one questions the flush, the cheat gets the pot. If a player challenges the flush and makes the cheat spread the cards, revealing the spade, the cheat can say, "Why, I thought I had a flush. Sorry."

Splashing the Pot

Splashing the pot is a favorite of many players, from neighbors playing Friday night poker to high-stakes games. Card rooms have a specific rule regarding this practice and dealers who have been around are quick to stop a player who does it. It's a simple move. When it comes time to call the bet, the sharp will toss chips into the center of the pot and say, "Call." At this point it's anybody's guess exactly how many chips were tossed into the pot. If the bet was \$10, the player could have tossed in \$7. A player who does this should be politely warned and told the proper way is to place the bet between his chips and the pot. That way everyone at the table can see the bet. If the practice continues, the player should be asked to leave the game.

SLOT MACHINES

Slots are popular for many reasons, but one that keeps them truly popular is the size of their jackpots. Any time of the day, a person can walk into a Las Vegas casino with just a few coins in their pocket and in minutes become a millionaire. No other game of chance in the world gives a player the opportunity to win millions with a bet of a few nickels.

For the casino industry, slot machines are double-edged swords. On one side, slots are their bread and butter. On the other, slots are the easiest and most profitable for cheats. The largest losses reported by casinos are from slot machine scams. The biggest reported loss I recall was a slot scam that involved a team of cheats beating the Stardust out of millions of dollars. All slot scams of this size have one thing in common: there has to be someone on the inside providing help to someone on the outside. I'm not saying there aren't methods of cheating done by scam artists on their own, but the largest and most damaging losses to a casino are carried out with inside help. In this chapter I'll explain how I know firsthand about slot cheating scams and one in particular that has a good chance of still going on today.

ONE-ARMED BANDITS

There are countless stories on how slot machines got the name "one-armed bandits." Even Al Capone is credited with

this one. According to this particular story, Al and a few of his associates were placing slot machines in the Mineola Hotel, a hotel on the chain of lakes in Lake County, Illinois. It was during a conversation at the bar when one of Al's associates made a comment: "Look at those machines. They look like a bunch of bandits with one arm, backed up against the wall waiting to take on the world." It was Al who laughed the loudest and said, "Ya, that's what they are all right, one-armed bandits."

Slot machines have made some major advancements since the days of Al Capone. Today, machines are run by computer chips. Freewheeling slots are almost obsolete. With the introduction of electronic and computer-generated machines, a new breed of slot cheat has emerged.

RULES TO LIVE BY

Professional slot cheats who are rarely if ever caught follow a few simple rules and never break them.

1. Don't be greedy. Less now means more over the long run.
2. Don't stick around longer than necessary. Collect your winnings from the tray and leave. Only go to the casino cage or bartender to cash out when it's absolutely necessary.
3. Don't take unnecessary risks. It's better to leave the machine with credits on it than stick around and get caught. If someone is continuously watching or wandering by, leave.
4. Keep everything a secret. Never brag to anyone about any part of the operation. Only those directly involved should have any knowledge or discussion about the operation.
5. Spend time where the scam is to take place. Look

around and watch the employees, look for cameras, and watch as the mechanic fixes a machine. Note what takes place. Does the machine sound an alarm when it's opened, or does a light on top of the machine flash on and off? Look for a "blind" area. (Every casino or bar has machines that are difficult to watch.)

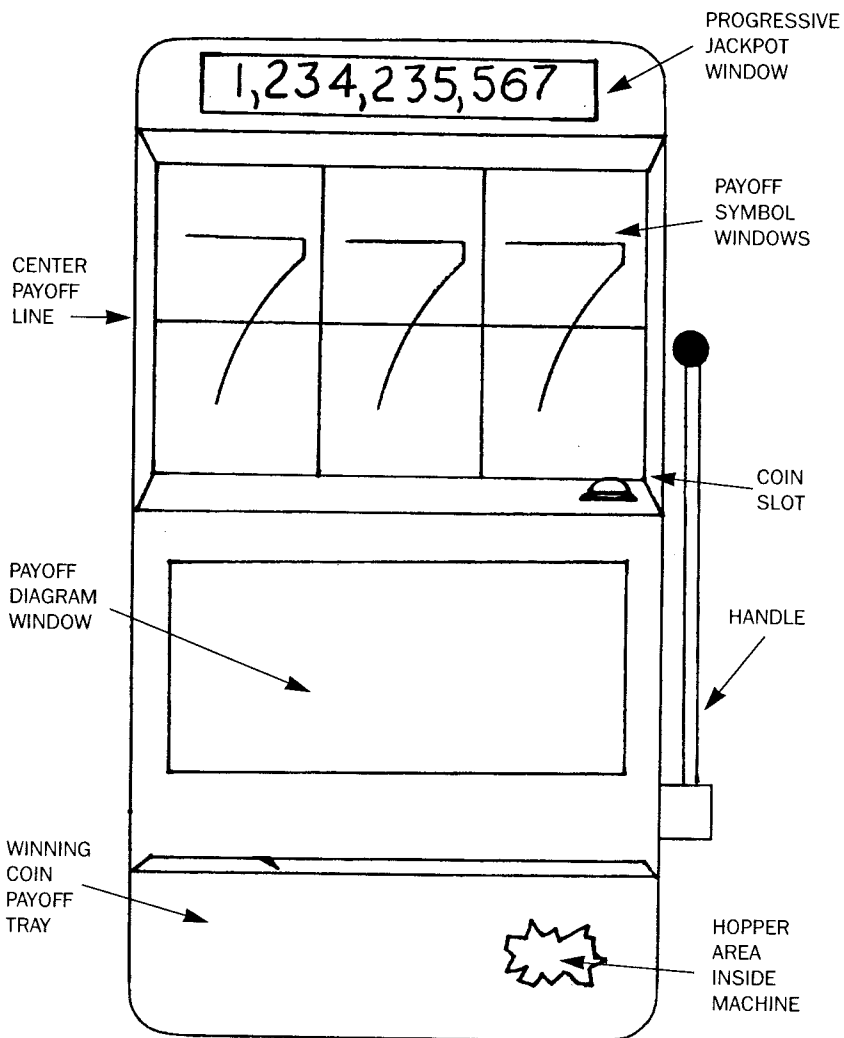
6. If a particular casino becomes an easy mark, check the shift schedules. Many professionals will hit an easy mark three times in one day, once on each shift.
7. Treat these scams as a full-time job so that you will gain an air of professionalism sooner.

THE FIRST SLOT CHEATING

According to slot machine history, the first slot machine was invented by a man named Charley Fey. In the late 1800s he introduced a machine in a San Francisco bar. It would line up various symbols, but the payoff wasn't in coins. Instead it allowed the winner to select a free drink. It wasn't long before someone figured out a way to cheat. This particular machine didn't have glass covering the reels. When the bartender was busy or looking the other way, all the cheat had to do was use a finger and stop the reels on a winning combination. Soon, machines were altered to pay coins instead of drinks, and glass was placed over the reels.

Drilling

No sooner than the glass was placed over the reels than someone devised the cheating method known as "drilling." The cheat would drill small holes through the metal casing just under the glass in each of the three windows. The cheat would poke a small, stiff wire through each newly drilled hole and stop each reel on a winning combination. To keep owners, bartenders, and other patrons from noticing the holes, some cheats would use colored putty to close the holes,



The above diagram represents an average slot machine and some of its more important parts.

then return another day and repeat the operation. Drilling is still in use on a much smaller scale, usually in small out-of-the-way places still using freewheeling slots. In places where these machines are found, drilling has been made easy with the invention of battery-powered drills and extremely good drill bits.

Spooning

Another popular method of cheating slots is spooning. Spooning is easy and fast. The cheat shoves a long-handled, spoon-looking device up the coin pay-off slot, tripping the lever holding coins in the coin shoot. This action releases the coins into the tray. The only drawback to this method is the machine only holds a small amount of coins in the shoot. The cheat has to visit several machines before making a decent profit.

SLOT PARADISE

Las Vegas is the slot cheat's Mecca. Professional cheats can hit a different slot machine every day of the week for over a year and never set foot in the same place twice. Those same cheats could start over the next year and hit the same places again, this time on a different shift. Almost every casino, bar, motel, hotel, and restaurant have three shifts. This means the same cheats could continue for three years and never see the same employees twice.

THE STRING AND THE COIN

Don't laugh at this next scam, but the string on the coin method really works. Earlier cheats would drill a hole in a coin and tie a string to it.

This works well, but is very slow. Getting maximum pay-off requires the coin be lowered into the machine until a click is heard, then pulled almost all the way out and lowered into

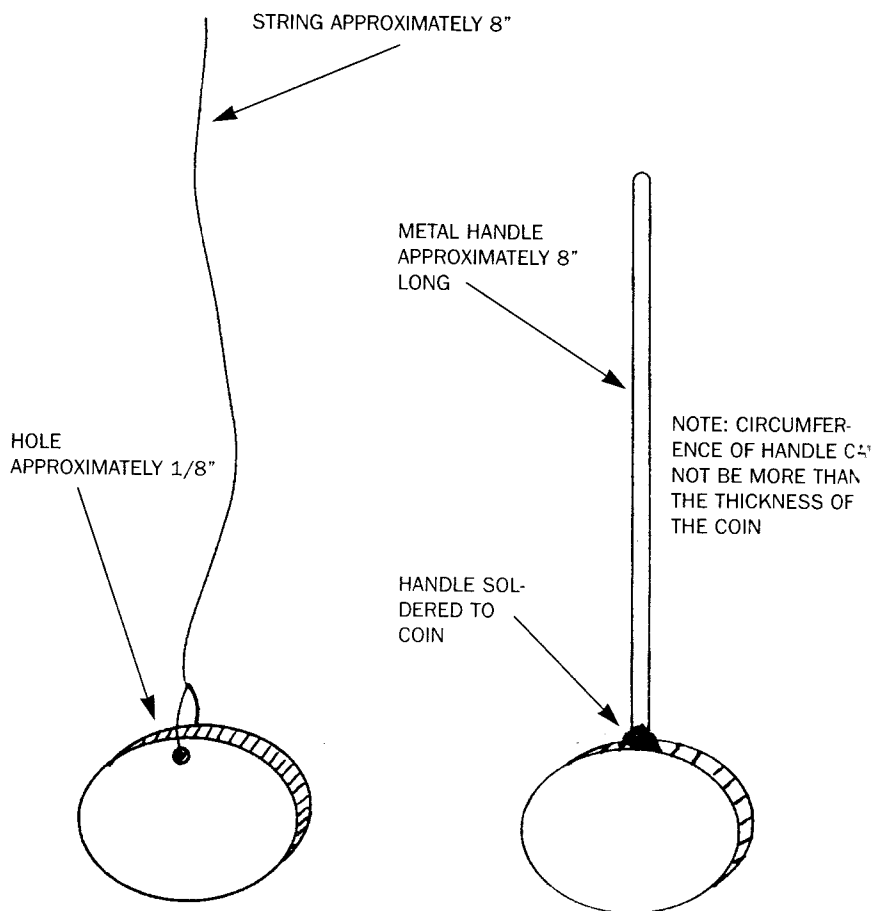
PROGRESSIVE
JACKPOT
WINDOW

PAYOFF
SYMBOL
WINDOWS



HOPPER
AREA
INSIDE
MACHINE

more



the machine again until another click is heard. This must be repeated as often as it takes to meet the machine's maximum coin limit. To speed up this process, cheats replace the string with a handle.

This allows the coin to be forced up and down in the slot rapidly. This is another cheat that should be reserved for out-of-the-way casinos and bars. Major casinos have surveillance cameras that catch this type of operation easily.

THE RATCHET METHOD

The ratchet method is another scheme that works well on freewheeling machines. After placing a coin in the machine, the cheat pulls the handle slowly until the feel of the first click. Then, with a powerful pull, the cheat rams the handle down. It's common to repeat this several times before breaking the catch on the inside handle mechanism. This catch is what locks the handle in place prior to each play. Once the catch is broken, the handle can be pulled without using coins. Professionals will play the broken machine just long enough to win a few hundred dollars, then leave.

RHYTHM METHOD

For a short period, cheats used what was known as the "rhythm method." This type of cheat was exclusively used on machines with timing gears. By manipulating the handle, the cheat could figure out the exact time the locking pins would release and stop the reels. This knowledge allowed the cheat to further manipulate the handle and force the reels to fall on a winning combination. Casinos became wise to this method and slot machine companies added a timing device that would alternate the times the locking pins would release and stop the reels.

JUST TAKE THE WHOLE THING

Probably the boldest move I've ever heard of was a team of slot cheats who went to a smaller casino just off the Vegas Strip. Two of the men went inside and another backed a pickup truck to the entrance. The moment the truck stopped, the two inside men went to a machine by the door, picked it up, and carried it to the truck. After sliding the machine into the bed of the truck, the two hopped in the bed next to it. Off

TE: CIRCUMFER-
CE OF HANDLE CA
T BE MORE THAN
E THICKNESS OF
E COIN



must be
maximum
e string

the slot
for out-
veillance

they went, and to this day I've never heard of these men being caught.

LOCK PICKING

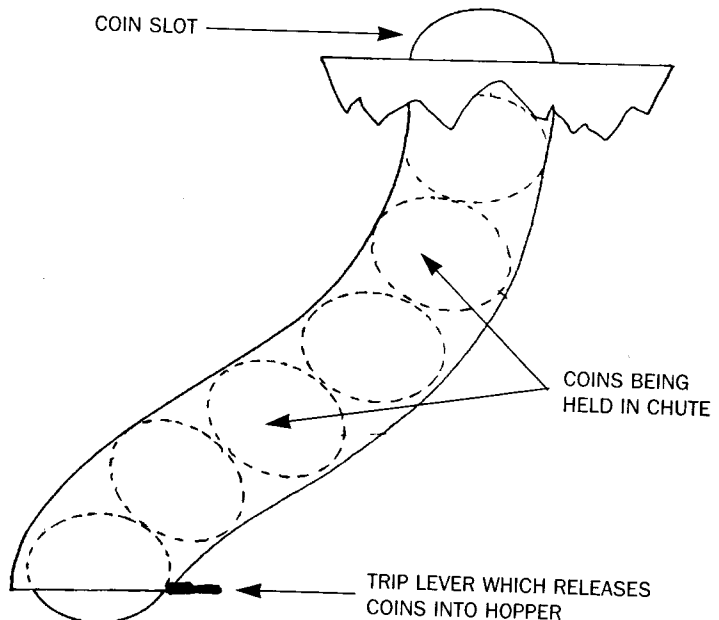
A good lock picker can make excellent money picking locks on slot machines. This, too, should be reserved for small, out-of-the-way casinos and bars. Larger casinos have alarms that sound when machines are opened, but smaller places rarely do. A professional cheat will sit and watch a casino's operation for extended periods of time, taking notes on how the machines open, if there are any alarms, and who does the mechanical work. Many small places, especially bars, have contracts with slot repair companies. If a machine needs repair, a call has to be placed to the repair company. It takes anywhere from a half hour to several hours for the mechanic to arrive. This window of time makes it easy for a cheat to pick the lock, open the machine, and empty the hopper. (The hopper holds the coins and can be accessed from the open door.) Quarter machines hold an average of \$300 in coins. A dollar machine will hold around \$1,200. It's difficult leaving with a large amount of coins all at once. A favorite method to remedy this problem is to use a female accomplice. Her job is to carry a large, heavy-duty purse and stand next to the player while he pretends to play. Little by little, the player places coins in the accomplice's purse. Standing next to the player, the accomplice also serves as a lookout. Usually the accomplice will make several trips to their car. Each trip is to empty the bag into a box concealed in the trunk. Most cheats who pick locks and open the machines shy away from setting the machine on winning combinations, although it's easy to do and empties the machine faster. Why wouldn't a cheat want to empty the machine faster? Each time a winning combination comes up, bells ring. The bigger the jackpot, the longer the bells ring. People get curious when bells ring for

extended periods of time and will investigate. One thing a cheat doesn't want is someone investigating his operation. It's much safer to empty the machine a little at a time. This is another example where less ends up being *more*.

SLUGS

Using slugs is another easy way to cheat machines. The cheapest slugs are lead, which at one time were widely used. There's one drawback to using lead slugs, and that is their weight. It takes some super-heavy-duty pants to carry a pocket load of lead slugs. Today, copper slugs are the most popular. They are easy to make and weigh the same as coins. The only drawback is that copper coins are more expensive to produce.

Professional cheats use caution when using slugs. As



coins are played, they are held in a coin shoot. As each coin is placed in the slot, the last coin in the shoot is pushed out and falls into the hopper. If slugs are used, they will be in the coin shoot until a series of genuine coins are deposited and have pushed all slugs into the hopper. Professionals who know this will immediately walk out of the building if the machine becomes stuck while using slugs. Professionals will also pick up their winnings and leave if slugs begin dropping into the coin tray.

Several foreign countries mint coins similar in size to U.S. coins. These work just as well and are often cheaper than copper slugs.

INSIDE OPERATIONS

As mentioned earlier, casinos fear inside operations because they just can't keep an eye on all employees all the time. Employees working with confederates to cheat a casino can break the bank. What causes most inside scams to become detected and fail is greed. Inside operations are almost impossible to detect. When professional thieves are patient and scam a little at a time, their operations last for years.

THE LONG HAUL

Long-range planning has become popular with big-time slot cheats. These cheats form organizations. Several members will attend slot mechanic school and learn to repair slot machines. Good slot mechanics can find work anywhere in the world where there are slot machines. Schooling takes about three months. After graduation, schools find jobs for their graduates. During the apprenticeship, apprentices will pick up on different methods of cheating. Excellent methods on cheating slot machines are common shop talk among journeyman mechanics. All apprentices have to do is watch and

listen. After a year or two of working as apprentice mechanics, organization members will begin applying to other casinos for work. They will only accept a job where they will be working together, which is fairly easy. Once they start work together, the sky is the limit and will stay that way if they don't get greedy. Some organizations have found that moving to a new casino location every few years is to their advantage.

FAKE JACKPOTS

One inside job, which worked great for several years, was a fake jackpot payoff scam. It would probably be in operation today if it wasn't for one member losing his cool. He thought he was short-changed on a payoff he received. Instead of trying to work it out with the other members, he went to gaming authorities and spilled the beans.

The organization consisted of five people: a slot mechanic, slot floor man, slot change person, a security officer, and a confederate player. The casino's procedure for a jackpot payoff over \$300 required that the first four be present during the payoff. The casino's idea was to have four employees responsible for signing off on such payoffs, and doing so would nullify any chance of cheating.

The confederate would enter the casino and pick a machine with a payoff between \$1,100 and \$1,200, sit down, and begin play. Picking a machine with a payoff of this value means maximum payoff without a record being made to the IRS, and a record of the player's name would also be avoided. Security officers in this casino had several duties. One was helping in the surveillance room. During the period surveillance was watching the casino away from the machine, the security officer in on the scam would come out on the floor and signal the floor man that it was all right to go ahead. The floor man would signal the change person, and the change person would signal the mechanic. In a matter of

two minutes, all five participants would be at the machine. The floor man and security officer would go to the casino cashier, sign the necessary forms, and pick up the money. The mechanic would reset the progressive jackpot, sign the sign-off card inside the machine, and the change person would make the cash payoff to the confederate. Everyone performed their duty and no one else in the casino was the wiser. This took place an average of 3 times a night. At the end of their shift, the inside members of the organization would meet with the confederate at a local bar and split the money.

When casino managers, gaming officials, and the police finished their investigation, they estimated this one organization had taken the casino for approximately \$2,145,000 over a 2 1/2-year period. Divide that by five, and each member made \$429,000. That comes out to \$3,300 a week.

WORKING TOGETHER

Some bartenders in Las Vegas and the contracted mechanic working for the bar work together on a scam. During early morning hours on weekdays, when the bar is empty, the mechanic will casually stop by for a visit. The mechanic has keys for every machine in the bar. Together the bartender and mechanic pick out the best machine, usually with the highest payoff. Using the key, the mechanic opens it and forces the winning jackpot combination to come up. Jackpots on progressive bar machines can run in the high thousands. The mechanic leaves immediately and the bartender calls the coin company who owns the machine. They in turn send a representative to pay the bartender. Because most bars allow their employees to play the machines, this doesn't come under suspicion.

CHEAT THE CUSTOMERS

There was a bar owner who attracted customers to his bar

because of large slot machine jackpots. He owned his machines and did his own mechanical work. He fixed his progressive machines so it was impossible for a customer to hit the jackpot. When a machine reached a large amount, and there were no customers, he would let his bartender go home. Once the bar was completely empty, he would force the jackpot combination to appear on the machine. When a customer did come in, or when his relief bartender arrived, the machine would still be locked on the jackpot. This would serve as proof that someone really hit it. He would tell his customers and bartender that it was a tourist who just happened by and hit it.

Owners of a bar close to the University of Nevada used a similar scam. The owners owned their machines and set the machines so that progressive jackpots were practically impossible to hit. Most of the customers were college students, so the bar was usually empty in the early morning hours. During periods when the bar was empty, the owners would reset the progressive payoff back to its beginning. These cheats went so far as to post a "winners list" and would use fake names for winners. To keep the students interested, there were incentives such as drawings for large cash prizes. For each hour of play a player would receive a ticket for the drawing. The drawing wouldn't take place until all tickets were given away. The last ticket was always given away when the bar was empty. Posted rules stated the drawing was to take place immediately after the last ticket was given away. When customers arrived, posted as the winner would be the name of someone no one knew.

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Most professionally organized slot scams involve very few people. For obvious reasons less is better, but occasionally there's an exception to the rule.

In 1975, I met and became friends with two slot mechanics who were employed by a major strip casino. We had known each other for about three years when one day one of them approached me, "We stumbled on a way to make machines pay off until they empty," he said. "The casino, gaming, or anyone else will never figure out how we do it. Even if they do, it can be traced to an honest mistake in setting up the machine." I was asked if I wanted to try it. I didn't have much to do at the time so I agreed to try it. The plan was for me to come to the casino at a prearranged time. Upon arrival I would go directly to one of several bars and wait. They would find me. One of them would pass by the bar and catch my eye. If I saw him nod yes, I would get up from the bar and follow him, at a distance. If the signal was no, I could do what I wanted the rest of the evening; the deal was off.

When the deal was on, I would follow the mechanic through the casino, sometimes for a half hour. He would finally take me past a series of slot machines and would come to the other mechanic, who was working on a machine. I would stop and begin playing the machine next to the mechanic. When I began play, the mechanic would close the door to his machine and leave. I would immediately move over and begin playing that machine. It was incredible: about every third or fourth pull, I'd hit a payoff. These particular machines were dollar machines and the payoffs were between \$20 and a \$100 each time. It would take about a half hour to empty the machine. The floor man, who wasn't in on the scam, would come to the machine and authorize the machine to be filled. I would repeat the operation once the machine was filled. When the machine emptied again, the floor man would come over and authorize another fill. After the machine was empty for the third time, the floor man marked the machine out of service, and I was politely asked to play another machine. This was standard operating procedure, but instead of playing another machine I would leave

and go home. In all I would take about \$3,000 out of the machine. I would do this an average of twice a week, and the money was split three ways. On occasion, this scam was pulled twice in the same evening.

Winnings taken from a machine each time were small payoffs. Even though the total amount was over \$1,200, there wouldn't be a record to the IRS or a record of my name in a casino log.

I came to find out later that there were at least 10 of us acting as confederates. I worked this scam for almost two years. This means approximately \$5,000,000 was taken, just during the period I was involved. One day I was told the operation was coming to a halt: one of the mechanics was going to retire, at age 35.

Several years later I had a conversation with the mechanic that didn't retire. During the conversation I found out that he trained three other mechanics how to "fix" machines. They in turn went on to different casinos, so who knows how many mechanics they've trained. To this day, no one I've talked to has ever heard of anyone being caught in this scam, and it's very possible it continues to this day.

Trying to keep employees from stealing under circumstances like this, one casino in Las Vegas has forbidden employees of certain departments from associating with employees of other departments. The Imperial Palace has gone to the point of setting rules governing the dating of its employees.

COMPUTER-RUN SLOTS

It takes the help of someone on the inside to effectively scam a modern computer slot machine. Persons involved in these scams have stated, "The more technical the machines are made, the easier they are to set up for a scam operation."

In one such operation, a mechanic in a major hotel

designed a remote-controlled box. The box contained a computer chip comparable to the one running the machine. The difference between the authorized chip and the imported chip was the imported chip was programmed to hit the jackpot. The imported chip was placed in a box controlled remotely, and when activated would bypass the legitimate chip. This would force the winning jackpot combination to appear.

One day, the mechanic was in the slot repair department placing the box in a replacement machine. At the same time, a confederate entered the casino and began playing a predestinated machine. The confederate brought with him a special coin designed to jam the machine. When the machine jammed the confederate player complained to the floor man, who in turn called the mechanic. The mechanic arrived to investigate and, after careful examination, placed the machine out of service. He told the floor man that the machine needed major repairs and would have to be replaced. The mechanic left and returned with the machine containing the remote-controlled box. The moment the mechanic finished replacing the machine and closed the door, the confederate began playing it. In his pocket the confederate carried the control box. About 10 minutes into play the confederate pushed the control box button. Like magic, the four sevens lined up on the bottom line for the progressive jackpot win, which was \$175,000. When a jackpot of this size is hit, there are several steps a casino takes before the jackpot is paid. One of those steps is to have the mechanic inspect the machine for any malfunction or cheating devices. Once the mechanic signs off that the machine was legit, the rest is history.

VIDEO SLOTS

One of the easiest methods of cheating a video gaming machine is the use of a "zapper." These zappers are known as stun guns, the ones advertised to stop an attacker in his tracks

with a shock of several hundred thousand volts, and are available through catalogs advertising articles for self-defense.

Video machines are designed to tabulate winnings when the player hits winning combinations. Tabulated winnings are noted on the screen under the heading "credits." For example, if a player hits a winning combination that pays 40 coins, under the heading credits, the machine will display the number 40. If the player placed another series of coins in the machine and was to hit another 40 credits, the machine would tabulate another 40 and display 80 credits. It's during the period the machine is tabulating credits that the zapper works. Giving the machine a shot from the stun gun, just on the edge, will disrupt the tabulating process. The machine will continue adding credits past the point it was supposed to stop. Most machines have a built-in safety system that automatically stops the machine at 500 credits, no matter what happens. Then the machine runs through its programs to see if it should still be adding additional credits. Because there isn't a winning combination that warrants more credits, the calculator stops and no more credits are added. Play can continue. When another winning combination appears and the machine starts adding credits, another shot from the stun gun will run up another 500 credits. To avoid problems and the possibility of getting caught, most professionals who use this method stop at this point, gather their winnings, and go to another bar or small casino to repeat the operation. On a dollar machine, winnings for one 15-minute session would be approximately \$1,000. If a cheat felt like making a night of it, it wouldn't be difficult to hit 20 machines.

A DOWN SIDE TO SLOT SCAMS

Besides getting caught and sent to jail, there are other down sides to slot scams. These can be on the more serious side.

Years ago, I was introduced to a man at the Red Fez bar, a local hangout just north of the Sahara Hotel on Las Vegas Boulevard. It turned out this individual had helped invent the inner workings of video slot machines. Over the years I had many conversations with him and never got the impression that he was dishonest. At one point, this man began producing computer chips for a major Video Machine supplier. These chips altered the payoff so that it was virtually impossible to hit a royal flush. Later, the computer genius began feeling guilty and reported the operation to gaming officials.

Ultimately, the video company was shut down and the owners arrested. For all his troubles, my friend was shot to death in his driveway by a man hired by the video company owners.

CHEATING AT CRAPS

For more than 2,000 years, many sharp minds of the world have tried to formulate systems to beat the craps games. The problem is, there wasn't any, there isn't any, and there will never be any system to *legitimately* beat a craps game. I know two ways to win at craps. The first is being extremely lucky the first time playing, and then never playing again. The other is cheating. Since I have absolutely no expertise with luck, I'm going to tell you about cheating.

A LITTLE DICE HISTORY

Dice have been around for some time. Dice, similar to those used in today's crap games, have been found in Egyptian tombs. This means dice have been around at least 2,500 years. Archaeologists have unearthed dice that clearly show signs of alterations used to cheat. This means cheating at dice has been around for at least 2,500 years. Penalties for getting caught cheating during that period are hard to imagine. Those people had pretty harsh penalties for stealing a loaf of bread.

There are numerous stories connected with where and who started craps in America. Some say New Orleans, others New York, Detroit, and San Francisco. Wherever it started, it's one of America's most popular gambling games today.

WHAT IS CRAPS?

NOTICE: To a beginner, casino craps is sometimes difficult to understand. Those who are interested in all the mechanics of the craps game should read material and books specifically designed to teach craps. In this segment, the author gives only a brief overview of the craps game. Those who know the game will want to pass over this section.

There are many versions of dice throwing. The craps game outlined here is typical of casino craps. In some circles, it's called "bank craps."

The game starts with the players placing bets on the come, don't come, pass, or don't pass lines. The shooter throws the dice and the action begins.

The pass line. When betting on the pass line and the shooter throws a seven or eleven on the first roll, you win. (This is called a natural win.) Throwing a four, five, six, eight, nine, or ten on the first roll is called the point. Pass line bets win if, on a subsequent roll, the shooter repeats the point number before rolling a seven. If the shooter craps on the first roll (a two, three, or twelve), pass line bets lose, but the shooter may shoot again. As long as the shooter throws natural winners and winning points, the shooter can keep throwing the dice. Making a point and then throwing a seven before repeating the number is a loser and the shooter must pass the dice to the next player.

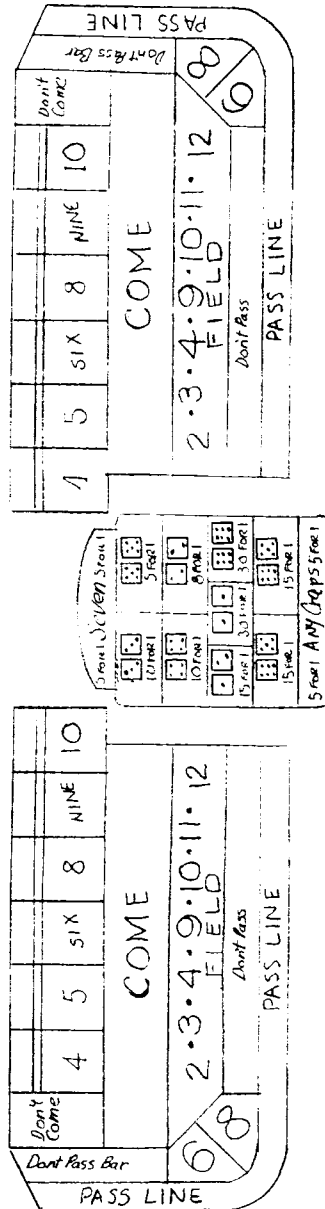
Don't pass line. This is the opposite of the pass line. If the shooter throws craps on the first roll, the don't pass bets win. If, on the first roll, the shooter throws a seven or eleven the don't pass bets lose. If the shooter makes a point number and then throws a seven before repeating the point, the don't pass line wins. Of course, the don't pass line loses if the shooter makes a point and then repeats the point before throwing a seven.

Come line. Bets on the come line are placed once the point number is made. If the shooter rolls a seven or eleven, come

bets win. If the shooter rolls craps, the come bets lose. If the shooter rolls a number, the come bet is placed on the front line (see diagram). That bet stays there until either that particular number is rolled again, which is a winner, or a seven is rolled, which is a loser.

Don't come line.

This is the opposite of the come line bet. Like the come bet, the don't come is bet after a point number is made. If, on the next roll after the bet, the shooter throws craps, the don't come bet immediately wins. If the shooter throws a seven, the don't come bet immediately loses. If a number is rolled, the don't come bet is placed on the back line (see diagram) and stays there until the shooter throws either a seven or the number. If a seven comes first, the don't come bet



This diagram represents a typical bank craps layout. There may be some minor differences between one casino's layout and that of another.

wins, if the number is rolled before a seven, the don't come bet loses.

These are just the basic and most popular bets made on a craps table. There are at least 12 more ways to place bets, including taking and laying odds, buying bets, placing bets, hard-way bets, field bets, any craps, any seven, aces only craps, sixes only craps, ace-deuce craps, eleven, and horn bets.

Most casinos place limits on each individual bet. The Horseshoe Club in downtown Las Vegas is one of the only casinos I know of that has a continuously standing no-limit bet on craps. If a shooter wants to bring a million dollars and place it on one roll, he can have at it.

CHEATING

Hollywood's account of dice games has made many people believe cheating at dice is something it's not. Crooked dice will not come up on the same number or the number the shooter wants every time the dice are thrown. Altering dice, gaffing a table, or making illegal throws change the odds of certain numbers appearing. Craps is a game played on mathematical percentages. Over an extended period, in a legitimate game, the odds will be correct. The seven will come up more often, and the two and twelve will come up the least.

In legitimate games, there's only one way to make the two or twelve. There are six different ways a seven can be made. Altering dice will change these odds dramatically.

Usually, altered dice will allow some numbers to appear more often than the seven. Sometimes, if the dice are altered accordingly, the seven will appear more often than it should. Over the long run the cheater will eventually win against the legitimate player or house, or vice versa. In extreme cases, such as bust out joints, odds are changed so drastically that the long run becomes a very short walk.

HOUSE PROCEDURES CONCERNING CHEATS

Every major casino uses the same basic operating procedures. Each employee goes through a training program that includes reading, receiving booklets, and signing affidavits concerning these rules. One of these rules concerns the handling of suspected cheats. These rules are strictly followed. Employees fluctuating from those rules are usually out of a job.

If there's suspicion of cheating, none of the employees are to make gestures or comments arousing suspicions of other players. If a dealer, boxman, or pit boss suspects a player of cheating, each notifies the other in a confidential manner. Final decisions on how to deal with the situation rest with the pit boss. It's his determination to call surveillance, security, or both. The entire episode is handled in private. If it's decided cheating is taking place, the suspected player is approached by casino security and politely asked to step away from the table. Casinos have found this approach works best for two reasons. One, any conversation is not heard by other players. Two, it keeps from embarrassing the suspected cheat and decreases the odds of an argument. Occasionally management will wait for the cheat to leave the table and then detain him. This avoids fights among other players. I know people who would instantly want to kill the cheat, especially if they had sustained heavy losses.

THE BIGGEST CON

I call this the biggest con because it's the only one I know that major casinos, small houses, and bust out joints use, but are rarely suspected of.

This con uses a confederate working for the house. During periods of heavy betting, such as weekends or holidays, the house player is on duty. Occasionally, such as when a high roller is taking the house for a major loss, this special

player is called into action. Some casinos will give the house cheat a high line of credit. This allows them to approach a game and order playing checks like a bona fide high roller. This method also keeps employees who aren't supposed to know from knowing.

The house player has several duties. Occasionally, the job will consist of being obnoxious and irritating the targeted player. Irritating a player works. An irritated player with heavy winnings will bet more and make more high-risk bets. Other times, the house player will enter a game and introduce crooked dice. If the house player is caught by someone not tipped off to the con, the player will be approached in the same manner explained in standard house procedures.

THE DICE

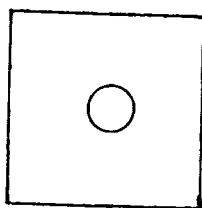
The primary difference between dice today and those made thousands of years ago is today's dice are usually made of plastic. Egyptians used dice made of ivory or bone.

Each die has six numbered sides, numbers represented by dots. Casino dice are usually clear red plastic and have white dots, while board games, bar games, and some sawdust joints generally use white dice with black dots. Numbers are one through six and placed on each die so that adding up opposite sides will total seven. For example, if the one is on top, the six will be on the bottom.

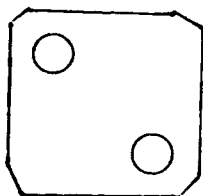
This is important. Many altered dice will have identical numbers on either side. Examining the dice and quickly adding up both sides will determine whether the dice are legit or fake.

Each side is perfectly square. A representative for the Bud Jones Company, manufacturer and supplier of casino dice, gave me the following information.

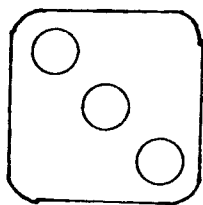
The width, height, and depth of each die are exactly $3/4$ inch. Each dot is drilled to a depth of $1/50$ th of an inch. The



SQUARE/RAZOR EDGE



FEATHERED EDGE



ROUND EDGE

Private games and board games, such as Monopoly, use feather- and round-edged dice.

weight of the paint used to make the white dot weighs the same as the plastic drilled away for each dot. The edges on casino dice are perfectly square, which gives them the name *razor* dice. There are several other styles of dice, such as feather-edged and round-edged.

ALLEY CRAPS

In a typical alley game (I say typical because there are many variations) the shooter will put up a predetermined amount of money. One or more players will take a piece of the bet. An example would be the shooter placing \$1,000 on the floor. One player might holler out, "I fade five hundred," and will place \$500 down on the floor. Another two players might fade two-fifty apiece, making up the entire thousand. If the shooter wins, he wins the entire pot. If the shooter loses, the players take their share out of the shooter's thousand. Meanwhile, other players are paying each other off on side bets. A typical side bet would be, "I bet a hundred the shooter craps on the next roll. Any

takers?" Another player might take all or part of the hundred. Sometimes the bettors will give odds between each other.

Alley games lend themselves very easily to cheating. I haven't known many that didn't.

DOUBLE-TEAMING

Double-teaming is a popular way to get a fixed game started. Sports stadiums are the most noted for this. Two confederates will start a game in a bathroom. It never fails: someone will come along and want to get in. Usually, in a few minutes, there are five or six players. The two original players use various methods of cheating and, before one or two innings of the ball game have passed, the marks are out a significant amount of cash. I've seen it happen where one guy is sent to get hot dogs and beer for the whole gang. After stopping off at the john to relieve himself and wash his hands, he finds himself caught up in a dice game. Broke and totally upset with himself, he has to go back to his hungry friends. To save face he has to come up with a lame excuse like the line was too long, or he forgot to bring his wallet.

TABLE CRAPS

Other than a few rules and principles of the game, alley craps and table craps are as different as night and day. For the swindler, alley games provide a wealth of opportunities to cheat, but table games make cheating difficult. Table layouts may differ from casino to casino, but the odds and types of bets are standard. Foreign countries use similar styles but layouts and types of bets differ from the American game.

THE DICE

The perfect set of dice to cheat with would be one die having all ones and the other having all sixes. I know several dice

players who have dreams of rolling dice like that, but to actually cheat with something that obvious would be a bit excessive. Craps is one of the fastest-moving gambling games around. The speed of the game is what allows cheats to easily use altered dice. A pro can enter altered dice for brief periods, take them out, and throw the legitimate dice again, then repeat the process several more times without anyone noticing.

Busters

Altered dice that have only three different numbers are called "busters." The three numbers are duplicated and placed on opposite sides of each other. One popular set of numbers is two, three, and six. Four, five, six, eight, nine, and twelve are the only numbers that can be rolled using these dice. The important thing is that it's impossible to roll a seven. Another popular set of numbers for busters is one, three, and five. Two, four, six, eight, and ten are the only numbers that can be rolled with these dice. Again, it's impossible to roll a seven.

Pros will usually wait until a point is made before introducing busters into the game, then they play the busters for several passes and switch the legitimate dice back into the game, letting the game take its course. During an evening, a pro can enter and take out busters several times, which is more than enough to make a decent profit. Another scenario for pros is to bet small while other players are shooting. When it's their turn at the dice, a comment such as, "I only feel lucky when I throw the dice," will be followed by a substantial bet.

Loaded Dice (Loads)

Loaded dice are the most famous of all dice alterations, being referred to in countless movies and sayings. Loads are the prime example of beating odds over the long run. I've talked to people and listened to others who are under the

impression that loaded dice will land and come up on the same numbers every throw. Not so. The idea behind loaded dice is to increase the odds of certain numbers appearing more often during the game. Loading the number four on both dice is popular. By doing this, the three will appear more often and the chances of hitting the six are excellent. Betting the six on the front line and hard way are now profitable bets. A good way to tell if the shooter is using loads is by watching his bets. Waiting until it's his turn to shoot to place heavy bets on the six and six the hard way is a good indication.

Space-Age Tech

Until recently, transparent dice in casinos were impossible to load without being easily detected. Before space-age technology, loading dice was reserved for white or bone-colored dice. The arrival of space-age technology has changed that. Recently, a scientist took an element named Rutherfordium and mixed it with white paint, then used the mixture to paint white dots on dice. The element Rutherfordium, which is much heavier than lead, worked much better than the old lead method. This experiment has opened the door for cheats to load transparent casino dice and it's almost impossible to detect.

Lead and Steel

For those who aren't scientists, the old method still works well for nontransparent dice. These dice are used primarily in private games. To make loaded dice the old-fashioned way, drill holes approximately 1/4 of an inch deep through all the dots on the side of the die to be loaded. Fill the holes, almost to the top, with No. 9 lead from a shotgun shell. To keep the lead in place, drop one drop of epoxy glue in each hole and let the dice sit overnight.

Once the glue has dried, repaint the holes by dropping one drop of paint at a time in each hole. Dropping small drops at a time will allow each drop to settle into the concave

appearance all the other dots have. Some holes may need more paint after the first application has dried.

If the dice being loaded have dots that are smooth and level with the die surface, let the paint dry rock hard. Use the fine side of an emery board to smooth out any bulges. Rubbing a soft cloth over the sanded area will bring back a shine to the entire die.

The best paint to use is the glossy model airplane paint found in hardware stores and hobby shops.

Face Work

Shaving part of the face (on one or more sides of a die) is called "face work." Face work keeps the dice from stopping on a particular side. The number a cheat wants to show up more often will be the face that's shaved. For instance, if the faces of the number four and five were slightly shaved, the dice would keep rolling past the four and five. This means the four and five have a better chance of ending up on top.

Shaving the faces off dice is not easy if the result is to be professional looking. The most popular method is to wrap the die in paper, leaving the side to be shaved exposed, and placing it in a vise. The tool of choice is a belt sander with very fine sandpaper. Sand off the face at a slight angle using a steady hand.

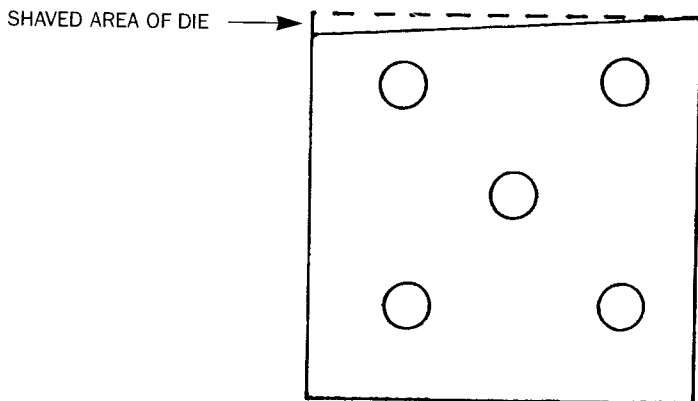
Edge Work

This is the same principle as face work, except the edges of the dice are sanded down instead of the face. Unless the players can't see well or are too drunk to care, this is a poor practice.

Magnetic Loads

If there was an award for the greatest dice-cheating method in the world, this would win first place. I've seen this work and I was in total amazement the entire time.

Years ago, this method of cheating used dice loaded with



The diagram shows the slight angle the dice should be shaved. Once the face is sanded, some of the dots will be completely removed and others partially removed. To repair the missing and partially removed dots, leave the die in the vise. Use a drill with a high-speed steel 9/64-inch bit and make new holes for the paint.

Paint the new holes using the same color as the original paint. The ideal paint is model airplane paint.

steel. The table would be fitted with electromagnets at each end. As the dice passed over the magnet, the boxman would use the necessary juice by lowering or raising a lever in order to stop the dice on the number the dice were designed for, the usual number being seven.

Today, this cheat has been upgraded with the introduction of Rutherfordium, which can be hard to find. Using paint mixed with this element, you only have to paint the dots on one side of the dice. The grip that can be placed on the dice using this paint mixture is incredible. To display the power, a dealer threw the dice full length of the table. The dice were at least five inches off the table when the power was turned up

full force. The dice were sucked flat against the felt. In another demonstration the dice were allowed to land and stop on their own. The numbers were a five, a two, and a three. The magnet was turned on and the dice flipped over to a six and one. It was an amazing sight.

An Amusing Story

An associate of mine who is noted as one of the best craps dealers around, told me of a time he was working a private game. The house was using magnetic loads. The handles for increasing the magnets' power were to the left and right of the boxman.

The star of this story, the shooter, was a high roller and didn't mind letting everyone know his importance. Draped off his left arm was a knock-out of a woman and the shooter was making every effort to impress her.

The shooter, who was standing to the far left of the dealer, had just thrown the dice. A number came up and players were beginning to place their back and front line bets. The dealer to the right was having difficulty arranging a bet. To help speed things up, the boxman stood up and leaned out over the table to help. As he did this his suit pocket caught the left magnet handle and pulled it straight up, straight up being full power. The moment this was happening, Mr. Shooter was bending over to place a field bet, which was unfortunate. How my friend explained it to me was, "I thought it was a giant rat, and it jumped off this guys head." In reality it was a toupee, and it shot off the shooter's head and stuck right to the felt. Apparently the shooter was using some kind of metal clips to keep his wig fastened to his real hair. Fortunately for the boxman he saw what had happened and turned off the juice before the shooter reached for the wig. Everyone, including the shooter's girlfriend, laughed so hard that the game stopped for a good five minutes. The shooter picked up his wig, drink, and money and left.

Bevels

Bevels are dice sanded so that one or more sides are slightly rounder than the flat sides. Bevels will usually land on the flat edge.

IMPORTANT: When sanding dice, always use fine sandpaper, use soft strokes, and don't sand off too much at once. An auto buffing compound and soft, clean rag (old T-shirt) will buff out small scratches.

Flats

Dice shaved or sanded on opposite sides are called flats. These dice will land on numbers that have the opposite sides shaved more often than sides that are not altered.

Throwing flats can be compared to throwing a red fireplace brick. It almost always lands on one of the long sides.

The Six-Ace

A common style of flat is called the six-ace. These dice have been sanded on the one and six. The odds are greater that a six or ace will come up. This method produces more sevens, which would be more of a house cheat than a player cheat.

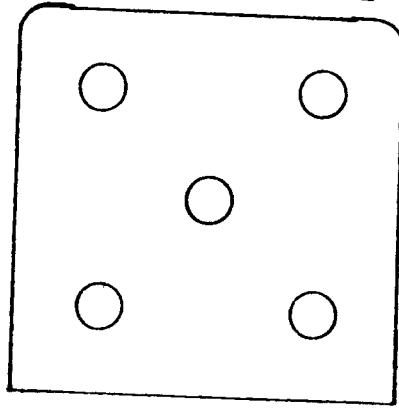
Flat Field

A popular cheat for the player is called a "flat field," flat because of the shaved or sanded sides, field because the sides that are shaved favor field numbers being rolled more than sevens. To properly shave dice to favor certain numbers, each die must have different sides shaved. An example would be one die having the one and six shaved and the other die having the three and four shaved. This will favor numbers four, nine, and ten being rolled, all field numbers.

Misses

Dice altered to roll odd numbers only are called "misses."

BEVELED EDGES



These are usually used by the house and placed into play if the shooter rolls an even-numbered point. The altered dice are on the same principle as busters, the difference being each die has a different set of three numbers. One die will have duplicate ones, threes, and fives, while the other die will have duplicate twos, fours, and sixes.

This makes it impossible for the shooter to roll

an even number and means a seven will come before the shooter can make the point, and so loses.

THROWING DICE

Some craps cheaters depend on their ability to control the dice and don't alter dice at all. Those who have played for some time will agree that attempting to cheat at dice without altering the dice or table is extremely difficult. I agree, but there are some excellent shooters who can make dice dance to their music.

Dice thrown legitimately will go through the air in a barrel roll motion. This type motion allows the dice to hit the backboard and land on the table randomly. To nullify the random roll and create odds in the shooters favor, there are several methods professionals will use.

Cackling

There are things besides chickens that cackle. Craps

cheats cackle dice. Every controlled shot a cheat uses starts with cackling the dice. Cackling is the shaking of dice together in a closed hand that is just open enough to make the dice strike each other but not change positions.

The Muff Shot

This is the cheat's nightmare. Nothing causes cold sweats and bad dreams more than the muff shot. This shot has cost some cheats a trip to the hospital or at best a few lumps on the head. As the shooter throws the dice, three or four dice fly across the table instead of two. What's happened is, the shooter lost sight of what he was doing and not only threw the legitimate dice, but the gaffed dice as well. There's no doubt this will bring suspicious looks from other players. Most of the time there will be a break in the game to inspect the dice and have a "talk" with the shooter.

Pillow Throw

A controlled throw that goes softly into the air and lands directly in the crack between the table felt and backboard is a pillow throw. This throw has to be practiced for hours on a daily basis. The object of throwing dice like this is to give the shooter better control over which numbers come up. When the dice land exactly right, they pop out and land just as they hit. Because this shot is so difficult to execute properly on a regular basis, it's rarely used.

Whip Shot

The whip shot is reserved for tables that have a backboard with a flat section near the felt, or back room games using a flat backboard or wall. Without a section of flat backboard, this shot and many others are nullified by the protruding rubber diamonds found on casino tables.

There are several interpretations of the whip shot, but the one most used is this. The shooter will line the dice side by

side with the number the shooter wants to come up on top. Picking the dice up by the sides and rapidly throwing them with a whipping motion nullifies the barrel roll motion. To make this action work the dice have to hit the lower flat portion of the backboard. Back room games using a wall for a backboard are perfect for the whip shot. The dice hit flat and bounce back to the table. This increases the chances of the dice coming up on the number the shooter wants.

Skid (Slide) Shot

Skid shots are reserved for back room games only because casinos would allow the shooter to throw a skid shot just once. Throwing a skid shot at a casino table will get a polite warning from the boxman. If the shooter does it again, it will be the shooter's last throw for the evening. The skid is simple. The shooter places the dice in one hand, cupping one die with the little finger and allowing the other die to rest above it.

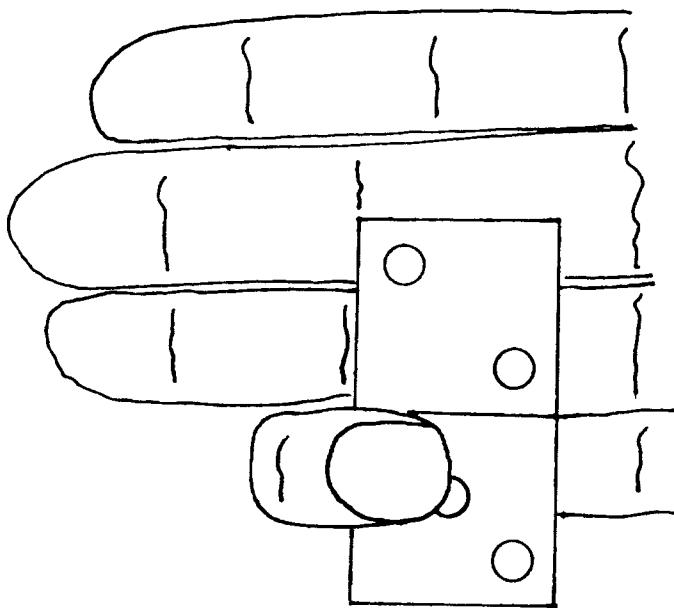
A sidearm throwing motion with the hand allows the die, gripped by the small finger, to skid across the surface never changing the position of the number. The other die topples through the air as it is supposed to.

The Pinch

Killing the roll of one die is the object behind the pinch shot. Place the dice on top of each other. The desired number will be on top of the bottom die. When ready to roll, the shooter holds the dice, one on top of the other, and tosses them in the air together, as in a pillow shot. When the dice land, the top die will pinch the bottom die to the table, forcing the bottom die to stay. The top die will continue to roll. Shooters usually use this shot to avoid the seven. When the one is placed as the number to hit, it decreases the chances for a seven considerably. The only number on the other die to make a seven is the six. This is a shot that's also reserved for private games.

Blanket Roll

This is probably the easiest cheat to perform in a craps game. Military personnel, college students, and sometimes prison inmates use their beds to play dice. To throw continuous numbers and rarely throw a seven, pick the dice up side by side with the ones touching ones or sixes touching sixes, and toss them outward. The dice roll forward on the blanket and appear to be rolling legitimately. Blankets kill the barrel roll effect and the dice usually roll exactly as they were thrown. Sevens are rarely rolled using this method.



To perform the skid shot, the shooter places the dice in one hand, cupping one die with the little finger and allowing the other die to rest above it.

TWO CONFEDERATES

A good method for attacking a house is two players working together. One confederate will enter the house and begin play. A few moments later the other will join in the same game. Designated beforehand, one will control the altered dice and bet conservatively. The other will do the serious gambling. There are two main objectives to this plan. One is to take suspicion off the shooter and the other is to have most of the attention focused on the heavy betting. It's human nature to watch big play. This allows the shooter ample opportunities to switch dice, control shots, and make various other moves to protect the partner.

TRIAL RUN

It's as simple as it sounds. Clever cheats enter a game with caution. One move that keeps many cheats out of trouble is the trial run. The cheat will fake the use of altered dice and make unusual moves and hand control gestures. All this action is to see if anyone is paying attention. If the cheat is stopped and questioned about the suspicious activity, nothing happens because everything is legit. This tells the cheat there is little chance of pulling off anything in this game and he will leave after a few rolls. If no one is paying attention, it's a good bet the game is ripe for cheating.

TABLES

Casino and high-limit private games are usually played on tables. These tables come in various shapes and sizes, but the standard table is approximately 12 feet long and 4 feet wide. Fourteen players can stand comfortably at a table this size. I've seen as many as 20 players gathered around a casino table when the dice are hot. In cases like this, it's not

unusual for players to get hot at each other as the action increases. On occasion, a little pushing and shoving happens.

Layouts differ from one house to another, but the standard appearance and number sequence are usually identical (see craps table diagram).

Anywhere Games

In the back room, bathroom, alley, barroom, home, and work, and many other places, use of a standard table is nonexistent. Avid craps shooters will use anything possible just to get a game going. The most popular area is a wall and floor. Any wall connected to any floor. Such games are where cheats excel and the most flagrant cheating I've ever seen happens in alley and back room games. Games of this nature are sometimes dangerous for the novice or not-so-street-smart player. It's unfortunate, but I've seen knifings and shootings during games of this type.

A Short Story

Games are sometimes played in the strangest places. I've seen games played in the sand on Venice Beach, California, and on a fire escape landing in a hotel in Daytona Beach, Florida. The strangest game I've ever seen, though, was in the bathroom of a bar in Mineral Wells, Texas. A group of local Texans were trying to fleece a few of the helicopter trainees from Fort Wolters. The bathroom wasn't in the bar, but in a building out back. A local man laid a piece of plywood on the floor. It had been cut so it would slide into the urinal and cover the drain. The dice were thrown against the inside portion of the urinal and would end up landing on the plywood. As time went on, most of the players became drunk. Shooters were throwing the dice in all different manners. A favorite became throwing the dice hard into one lip of the urinal and counting the number of times the dice would ricochet before failing to the plywood. The dice had

he action happens. the stan- identical

ome, and d table is g possible wall and are where ever seen his nature so-street- ings and

aces. I've California, na Beach, h, was in group of helicopter n the bar, ce of ply- e into the against the nding on s became rent man- o one lip the dice dice had

become chipped and the edges knocked off from banging around the porcelain urinal.

The money being bet wasn't small change for a bar game. At one point there was approximately \$5,000 going either way. On what turned out to be the last shot of the evening, the shooter wound up and threw the dice as hard as he could. The dice bounced once and one die shot straight down through a crack between the plywood and the back of the urinal. When the plywood was pulled back, the die was gone, apparently down the drain. This being the only pair of dice within 100 miles, an argument followed. The argument ended in a blow-out fight. The aftermath included three players going to the hospital, two going to jail, and the almost complete destruction of the outhouse.

More on Magnetized Tables

Magnetized tables are used together with loaded dice. Some houses use elaborate methods. Others use shoddy, run-down tables and could care less, as long as it works. For years a major Las Vegas casino used the most elaborate method I've been told about, not in the regular casino section, but upstairs in a private room. These areas of gambling are rarely seen by gaming officials and sometimes the Gaming Commission doesn't know they exist. In this case, electromagnets were placed along the backboards at both ends, with one in the center. These series of magnets were controlled by the boxman, with controls recessed into the underlying edge of the table.

According to my source, one who helped design the table, only a handful of people, including upper management, knew about the magnets. None of the dealers and only two of the boxmen were privy to this knowledge. Everyone else on the floor level was completely unaware. Dice for these games were altered at a manufacturing plant and would be delivered to the casino in person. My source, who also worked the table

as a boxman, told me stories of high rollers being fleeced out of millions. The favorites of this casino were former oil barons, who had millions before the price of oil dropped.

There's always some skepticism when stories like this are told, but I've seen some of these fleecing jobs take place. There are many high rollers who play in the regular casino areas. These players usually want two things: playing at a table that's sure to be on the level, and playing to a crowd. There are many high rollers who get a high on knowing their action is attracting lots of spectators. A majority of big shooters like privacy and like to shoot with players on their income level. For this reason casinos have VIP areas, out-of-the-way action that makes the high roller easy to fleece.

In houses that have few professional resources to draw from, the tables set up for cheating have much to be desired. I've seen some with wires hanging underneath the table and others that sag where the weight of the magnet has warped the plywood. In one case the magnet gave off a slight hum when it was in use. It's hard to believe, but there are lots of gamblers who get so wrapped up in the game that a bomb could go off and wouldn't phase them, so a little hum from the table is nothing.

Another Short Story

It was late on a weekend night, and this particular strip casino was packed with one game in particular running hot. I was playing at a table with light action. Another player and I were discussing the big action when we noticed a player at the big game drop to the floor. He just laid there. From our angle we could see the dealer point in the direction of the downed player as he was talking to the boxman. The pit boss was summoned and he looked in the direction of the downed player, then he went to the phone and appeared to call for help. All this time, players were hollering and yelling, and no one was paying attention to the downed player. Security offi-

cers finally arrived and examined the player. After a brief discussion, the security guards moved the stricken player under the craps table so that the game could continue. When paramedics arrived, players to either side of the downed player moved just enough for the medics to pull the player from under the table. Resuscitation began in the aisle right behind the players. Not once did the game slow down. Every once in a while a player would turn and look down, but the big action continued. After the man was taken away on a stretcher, there was pushing and shoving between a couple of players jockeying for the newly created place at the table.

Omitting Numbers

The absence of one or two field numbers gives a distinct advantage to the house, especially when it's a setup game with wealthy marks. I don't know the psychology behind such action, but it never fails. When wealthy marks gather at a craps game, they seem obliged to bet the field and hard ways. Not just with little bets, but with monster bets as though they want to get even for a lifetime of losses on one roll.

The usual numbers for betting the field are two, three, five, nine, ten, eleven, and twelve. These numbers are printed on the layout, usually in a boxed in section.

A person would think seven numbers out of twelve should be easy to hit. Not really. Now take two numbers away and the odds become even more difficult. Five and nine are the most popular numbers to omit. On major casino tables the field numbers two and twelve will pay double. This is definitely not true in bust out games.

Padded Tables

Padding the tables is not a common type of table gaff. In small houses or setup games, tables will have one end and backboard padded differently than the rest of the table. The

only purpose this method serves is for a house player who throws controlled shots.

OTHER DICE GAMES

There are several other dice games that are popular, including dice cups, cages, boxes, and various styles of dice. These and other games of chance are covered in different chapters.

CARNIVAL GAMES

Have you ever been to a carnival and wished just once that you were the one walking around with an armload of top prizes? Or, are you fairly good at winning prizes and want to know how to cut your costs? If your answer is yes, read on. You're going to learn which games to play and which ones to stay away from, and how to take the big prize home.

There are more than 50 games regularly played at various carnivals. This chapter touches on some of the more popular games.

IMPORTANT

Cheating by carnies has been reduced over the years, primarily due to law enforcement and awareness of the general public. This doesn't mean cheating is nonexistent, only done less frequently.

HANKY PANKS

Hanky panks is a name given to carnival games that give prizes to every player, each time the player attempts to win a main prize. The prizes are usually worthless.

TRADE-UPS

Trade-up games are usually the most expensive games to play in the long run. These are the games that use the pyramid method of winning a top prize. This method is popular among carnies because the first few prizes are usually worth pennies and keep the lucky player interested enough to continue playing. A typical trade-up game will require a player to win three small prizes, which can be redeemed for one medium prize. To win the large prize, the player must win and then trade in two medium prizes, which means the player must win six small prizes to win a large. Some games have a grand prize that requires a player to have two large prizes to trade for the grand prize. This would require a player to win at least 12 small prizes to get the grand prize. Rarely will the grand prize be worth more than the cost of 12 chances.

GROUP GAMES

These are the games played against other players. Examples are the water gun game, race horse game, and pin ball game. These are also fun for children and parents, just for the sake of competition. At best, winning a major prize is difficult and expensive. These are also games that are easy and favorites of carnies to gaff.

GAMES OF CHANCE

These are the toughest and most often gaffed games on the midway. The string pull, duck pond, razzle dazzle, and the mouse game are all examples of games of chance. It is a fluke, and I'm not exaggerating when I say this, for a player to win at these games. The only people I have personally witnessed winning at one of these games is a confederate. If you have ever won at one, consider yourself extremely lucky.

GAMES OF SKILL

These are the games that bring the big prizes: the stuffed animals and jewelry. Winning consistently at games of skill takes practice. Knowing how to play beforehand can cut the odds down considerably. Usually, practice and knowledge will produce a major win on the first or second try.

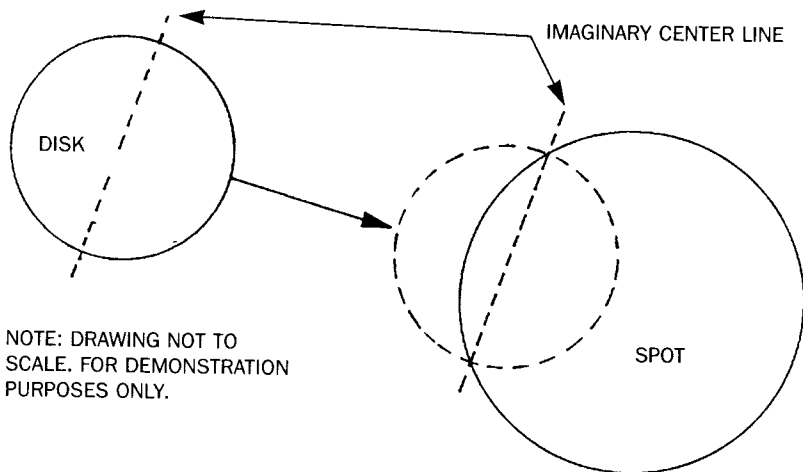
Don't be confused with games of skill and games of "looks like skill." Good examples of games that look as if skill is involved are basketball, set up the bottle, dart throws, ring a prize, and swing ball. These games are made to look like games of skill but aren't even close. Each uses laws of gravity, laws of physics, and other methods to make the game almost impossible to win without help from the carnies. I put the basketball game in this category because the carnies add so many variables to the game—smaller hoops, different size balls, balls with different weight, higher or lower hoops, bent hoops, and distance to the hoop. There's nothing skillful about these games, only luck.

COVER THE SPOT

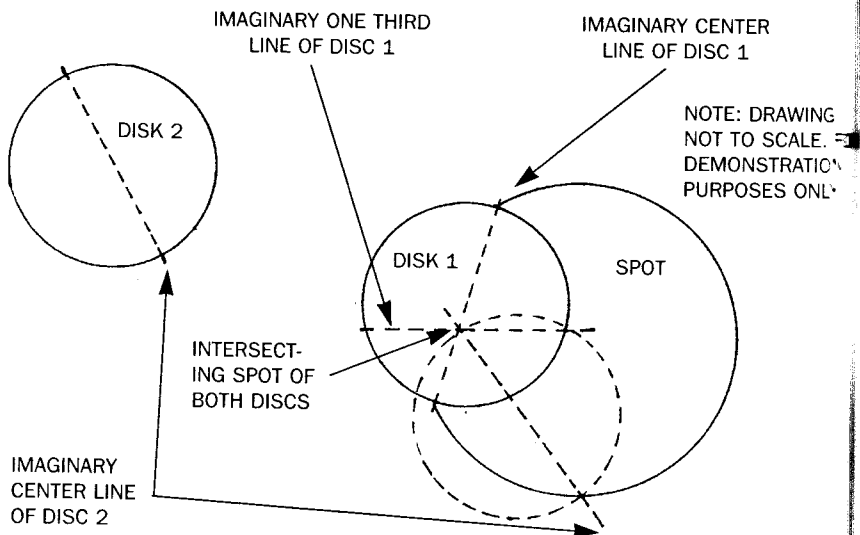
This is the game to play if you want to win on the first try almost every time. It's the only game I know of that will produce a win each time it's played. If I want to fill my den with stuffed animals, or want to impress a particular person, this is where I go. The trick is in knowing exactly what to do.

NOTICE: If, after reading and practicing the method outlined and diagrammed, you find it impossible to win, it's most probable the game is gaffed. Do not continue playing at this particular game.

The object of this game is to cover a spot painted on a board with five circular discs. These boards are usually removable. Where carnies are crooked, the boards with larger spots can be easily exchanged for the ones with legitimate



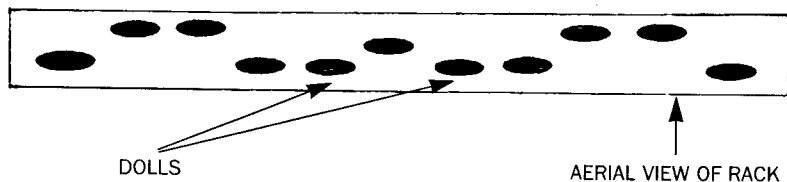
In your mind, divide the first disc into two different parts, center and one-third, then mentally divide the second disc in half. This is where the next disc must fall.



The rest of the discs will fall in the same manner as disc two. Being as exact as possible each time will allow a margin of error when placing the last disc. It sounds harder than it is. After the first few tries, it becomes rather easy.

ENTER LINE

NOTE: DOLLS TO THE BACK WILL BE THE ONLY DOLLS THAT WILL FALL OFF AND BE COUNTED.



THROWING AREA

and one-third,
disc must fall.

ARY CENTER
OF DISC 1

NOTE: DRAWING
NOT TO SCALE. FOR
DEMONSTRATION
PURPOSES ONLY

Dolls placed toward the front are almost impossible to knock completely off. The ones placed toward the back will automatically fall all the way off when knocked over.

spots. This is rare, but if it happens you will know on the first try. Games that are consistently legit will have dots painted on the permanently stationed "rail" separating the operator from the player.

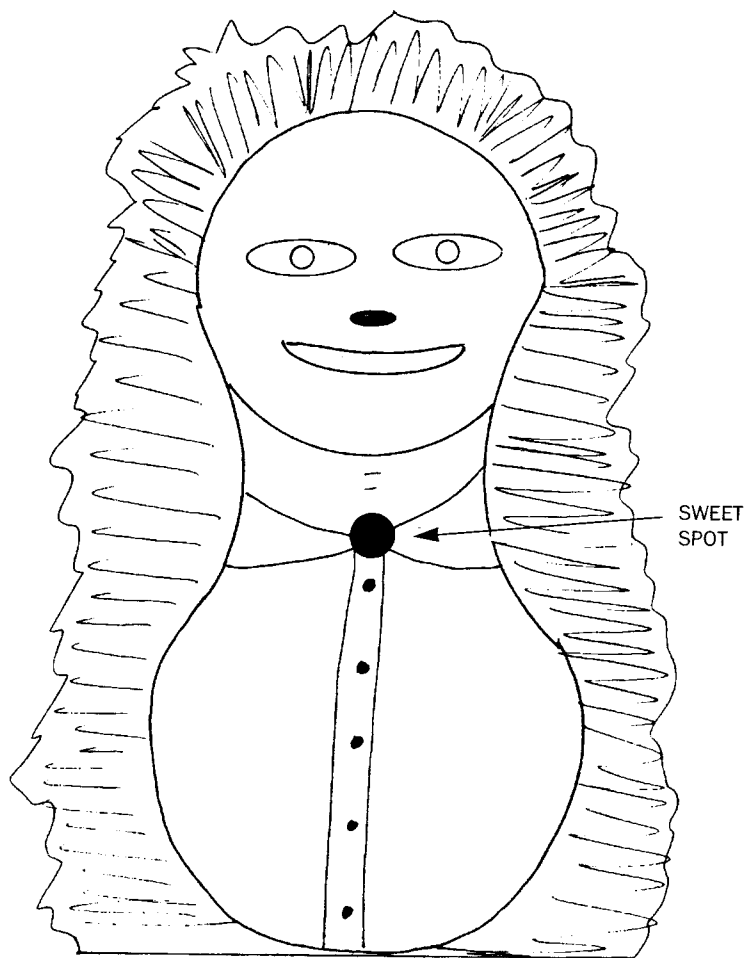
The secret of this game is placing the first disc. Placement is important. By not placing it correctly, the player cannot win. If placed correctly, it's almost impossible to lose.

The first disc must be placed exactly half in and half out. By pretending to cut the disc in half, place the disc over the dot where the halfway points touch the edge of the dot.

KNOCK DOWN DOLL GAME

Some games use catlike figures, some use dolls, but the object is still the same—knock down three figures and win a prize. Most games rule the doll has to fall completely off the rack. There are several methods to use to increase your odds of winning.

Look at the placement of each doll. It's sometimes diffi-



Hit the doll right where the bottom of the chin would be. This is just above the center of gravity for the doll.

cult to see, but looking hard enough will tell you which dolls are placed forward and which are slightly to the back of the rack. Dolls placed toward the front are almost impossible to knock completely off. The ones placed toward the back will automatically fall all the way off when knocked over.

The second advantage is to hit the doll right where the bottom of the chin would be. This is just above the center of gravity for the doll.

Lastly, accuracy is the key. A medium throw will knock the doll down every time it's hit above the belly. A hard throw reduces the accuracy and has no advantage. Occasionally, a hard throw will either spin the doll or knock it flat.

Throwing a ball takes some skill and a win isn't guaranteed every time, but knowing what to throw at will increase your odds of winning.

MILK BOTTLE THROW

This game uses skill, luck, and honesty from the operator. It's simple: hit directly in the center of the three bottles and

THROWING AREA



IMPOSSIBLE



POSSIBLE

AERIAL VIEW OF BOTTLE PLACEMENT

they all go over. If the operator places one of the lower bottles slightly ahead of the other, it's almost impossible to knock 'em all down. Look at the bottles before throwing. If they aren't evenly placed on the bottom, ask the operator to straighten them out. This increases your chances considerably, but you still have to hit the bottles.

OTHER TIP OVER GAMES

There are many games that require tipping over objects to win. In almost all cases, skill and practice are the only things needed to win, if the game is legit. Many games can be set up in your own back yard where practicing is free.

Careful observation of doll and bottle placement is essential. If any of the objects are placed out of line, the game can't be won and there's no sense in playing if the operator won't straighten them out.

SHOOTING GALLERIES

There's a reason many shooting galleries offer expensive prizes to winners: it's almost impossible to win. Gaffs such as bending the barrel, tweaking the sights, using graphite bullets instead of lead, oversized stars, small powder loads, and many more tricks, make this game worthless to play. If you don't like money, play this game.

STREET CONS AND OTHER CHEATING METHODS

Con games come in many shapes and forms. Some are big, elaborate, and time-consuming. Others are inexpensive and quick. Although the big cons reap large profits in the end, there are short cons that produce substantial profits. In today's world, con artists have become so sophisticated and sharp, many marks are unaware they've been taken long after the con is over.

ANSWERING SERVICES

One of the most important tools offered a con man today is the use of an answering service. To apply for a service is easy. Many answering services will accept a money order payment through the mail. In most cases there's no contract, so personal contact by the con and the answering service is avoided. If an answering service demands payment in person or a contract, the con can call another. There are plenty in the yellow pages.

THE PIGEON DROP

This is one of the oldest plays around. It doesn't take much time or effort to pull off, but the pigeon drop can be rather lucrative. Police records show as much as several hundred thousand dollars has changed hands in one pigeon drop con.

There are numerous variations and ploys used for a pigeon drop, but the following is my favorite and uses what I call the peek in the poke method.

A pigeon drop requires the use of at least two inside people: the scout/worker and the con man. The scout acts as a lookout for potential marks. It's easy to spot a pigeon. He's the person meandering around, acting as if there isn't any direction or special purpose to his destination, or as though he has a lot of spare time on his hands. People who act and walk with an air of purpose should be left alone. These types of people are fairly sure of themselves and are difficult to con. Once a mark is spotted by the scout, the con man will be signaled and the con is on.

The con man will approach the mark and say something like, "Did you see what I found right in front of us?" It's important to use the term "us." This makes the mark feel like he is part of the "find." The con man gives the mark a quick peek at the wallet (a peek in the poke), which contains a \$1,000 bill in front and a \$1,000 bill in back. In between are brand new \$1 bills. The con man states there's at least \$20,000 or \$30,000 in the wallet. Further inspection proves there isn't any identification. The con man acts as though he is honest and wants to return the money, but is willing to split the find should they not be able to find the rightful owner. The con man then takes the mark for a walk on the pretense of finding an attorney. "I see someone there who looks like an attorney I met in court once," is a typical comment the con will make as he points to someone on the street. The attorney turns out to be none other than the scout. The attorney takes a look at the wallet and seems to count the money. To everyone's surprise, the attorney says there's at least \$40,000 in the wallet and confirms there is no identification. He now says he can handle the matter and assures both parties there shouldn't be any problem for them to split the profits in about 90 days. To make sure everything is handled right, everyone will need to

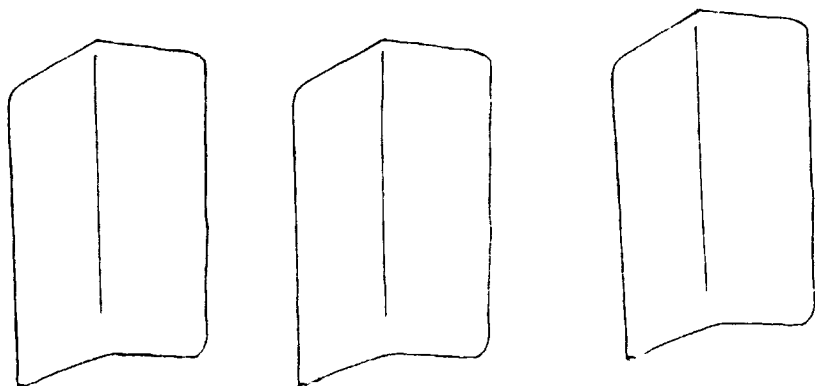
go to his office and sign the necessary papers. Along the way, the con suggests to the mark that he buy his interest. The con says, in effect, he doesn't want to wait 90 days for the money and offers to sell his share for \$5,000. That will leave the mark thinking he will be getting the whole \$40,000 for a \$5,000 investment. One con man I interviewed said he gets more than 80 percent of his marks to pay off.

Don't laugh; this con takes place often and con men are getting rich pulling it off.

THREE-CARD MONTE

This was my first big lesson at being taken by con artists. I was 19 and in the army stationed at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. Previous summers working in carnivals and watching carnies fleece people didn't teach me as much as I thought. I was with two army buddies on my first trip to New York City. We had just arrived by train and decided to walk around. A few blocks from the station we saw a group of people gathered around a man standing at a small fold-up card table (today's mobs use cardboard boxes). Deciding to investigate, we watched as he manipulated the cards. "Pick the queen," he said. A man threw a \$5 bill on the table and pointed to a card. "Sorry, wrong card," said the dealer as he turned the card over. I watched intently as he did it again and again. Almost every time, I picked the right card in my head. My buddies and I were getting eager to get in the game. To make a long story longer, we got our wish. Our eagerness ended up getting us broke, two blocks from the train station, and not a penny to our names. It was the end of my first trip to New York.

The dealer, known as a tosser, manipulates three playing cards, then stops to ask, "Who wants to pick the lady?" Anyone in view can throw money on the table and attempt to pick the queen. Today, the bet is usually between \$20 and \$50.



The object of three-card monte is to pick the queen. The other two cards can be any denomination. The following diagram shows what the cards look like. Notice each card is bent long ways. This is done for easy handling by the tosser.

If no one steps up to pick a card, a shill steps in, makes the bet, and usually picks the queen. This move entices others to take a chance. Another method to entice marks to lay down money is to offer twice the bet for picking the queen.

Years ago, the game was played on small, cheap, break-down tables. These tables could be broken down and transported to another location in a matter of seconds should trouble arise. Today, the mobs use cardboard boxes, which can simply be abandoned right on the spot should police arrive or a fight between the mark and the tosser break out. Mobs have several lookouts to watch for police. If the tosser hears one of the lookouts holler something like "break it up," the game stops immediately. Everyone involved in the scam goes in different directions and meets again at another predetermined location.

There are several ways tossers manipulate cards, but the following method is most widely used. In a series of swift hand motions, the tosser picks the cards up two at a time (one



cards can be any
e. Notice each

makes the
s others to
lay down
n.

ap, break-
and trans-
ds should
es, which
uld police
break out.
the tosser
eak it up,"
the scam
ner prede-

s, but the
s of swift
time (one

in each hand) and moves the cards over one another, dropping them back on the table. The hand is quicker than the eye and what the mark thinks he sees is not what is happening. The tosser appears to drop the queen in one spot, but "throws" the queen to the location everyone thinks is going to be occupied by one of the other cards. In another move the tosser appears to transfer two cards, but only makes hand moves and neither card changes locations. (See Chapter 2; false shuffle.)

Just as the mark thinks all is lost, the tosser adds another trick to the game, which leads the mark to think he can't lose. "Accidentally" bending the edge of the queen, the tosser works the cards back and forth. During the rotating process, the tosser bends the queen's edge back to normal and bends the edge on one of the other cards. The prospective mark thinks he has an inside track to a win and picks the card with the bent edge. Wrong move.

Some tossers are skilled in magic and use other slight of hand tricks. Most always, tossers use hands-on methods along with fast card manipulating. A thought to remember is, even if the game were totally legit, a player has only a 33 percent chance of being right. The odds are extremely high in the tosser's favor no matter what. Three-card monte is a game the mark can never win at.

OBITUARY CON

This is one of the slickest cons going, but it takes advantage of people who are in the middle of bereavement.

The con man looks through obituaries and finds the name and address of an apparently wealthy and newly widowed woman. Dressing the part, the con man approaches the widow at home and claims to be a private jewelry maker. He has with him an expensive gift, which was to be presented to her from her late husband, but the gift hasn't been completely paid for. If the widow bites and pays the entire balance due,

the con man takes it and leaves. If the widow balks at the higher price, the con man states that out of his own embarrassment and grief for the departed, an exception can be made to accept the actual cost of the gift, which is slightly lower than the first price. In all likelihood, the widow will open the box and find a fine piece of jewelry, which is really fake gems in a gold setting. It's also doubtful the widow will ever have the jewelry appraised.

TRANSPORTATION CON

This con uses a mailing list provided by a mailing list company, which gives the names and home phone numbers of wealthy executives. The con calls the home telephone number during the day and asks to speak to the wife. If he reaches the wife, the con man states he is with a prize award company and her name was drawn as the grand prize winner in a random drawing. Her prize is a new Mercedes and is ready to be shipped to her house if she accepts. Before that can be done, she must send the transportation charges, which come to \$544.76. The money has to be sent by Western Union to a central distribution point in Las Vegas, Nevada. The sending instructions state the money is to be paid to any company representative of *THE AMERICAN PRIZE AND DISTRIBUTION COMPANY*. The representative has to have a password, and a password is made up between the con man and the person sending the money. A company ID and password is all the con man needs to get the cash. In many cases knowing the password is enough, but an ID is easily made, complete with the representative's picture, just in case.

If the lady balks at sending the money by saying, "I need more time," or "I'd like to speak to my husband first," the con man tells her she needs to make up her mind in the next few minutes or the next person on the list will be contacted. That is usually enough to do the trick.

RENTAL CON

This type of con takes time, up-front money, and sales ability. First, the con opens an office. Rarely will a con man get a business license because the doors are going to close in about three weeks. Renting nice office furniture and equipment is important to a successful operation. Cheap and shoddy surroundings turn off prospective marks. Hiring a secretary who will not be privy to any details of the operation is also important. Her duty is to take phone calls and set up office appointments. Employees of con operations who are not in on the con are always paid in cash. If employees ask why, a simple explanation that an error was made in the company's accounting and banking area and payroll checks will be available in two or three weeks will suffice. Employees treated in a kind and courteous manner will act accordingly to clients.

Advertising is the key to this business. Placing an ad in rental listings looking for renters to rent a "servant's quarters"-type house on a celebrity or wealthy businessman's property is one method. In exchange for low rent, the prospective renters will be obligated to watch the main house and make sure the maintenance people do their work. Along with the rental property, the renters will have complete use of the pool, tennis court, weight room, and so on.

To start the deal, the prospective renters must pay a non-refundable credit check fee of \$35 cash. In one or two days a phone call is placed to the prospective renters and they are told they have been accepted and must come in with first and last months' rent in cash and sign the lease. The move-in date will be in approximately five to six weeks.

The rental property is not shown because the people renting the property want complete privacy and anonymity prior to the actual move-in date. The owners will be happy to decorate the rental any way the renters wish. The prospective

renters are shown a map of the general area and given a description of the property. In about three weeks' time this type of con can net the operators a few hundred thousand dollars. Cons of this type are located in the "high-rent" district of cities like Los Angeles, Miami, and New York.

Another version of this scam advertises for people who want to work out of town as caretakers of a huge estate. Because of the personal property value and other like things, a deposit of several thousand dollars must be made. The deposit will be refunded at the termination of employment.

EMPLOYMENT CON #17

This con is easy and doesn't take a lot of front money. No office space, secretary or office equipment is needed. Advertising in the newspaper under "help wanted," the con asks for people who want to work at home and use their home as a distribution center. The con hires an answering service to take answers to the want ad. When contacting the mark, the con man states he is the owner of a new sales company selling discount merchandise. To keep costs down, the company is not leasing huge office and warehouse space. What is needed are people who are willing to use their garages as warehouse space and receive shipments from UPS. Company salespersons will come to the house and pick up the merchandise for delivery to customers. All the mark has to do is open the boxes, check invoices, and make sure the items on the invoices are actually in the boxes. No sales, answering phone calls, or any other office duties. For doing this, the mark is promised a salary, mortgage note payment, and payment of utilities. The mark is again assured that this is a big savings to the company because the leasing of a warehouse and hiring extra employees would be far more expensive.

If the mark agrees, the con man makes an appointment to meet at the mark's home. This meeting is to inspect the home

and evaluate the prospective employee. The only contact the mark will ever have again with the con man is through the answering service.

Because the merchandise is expensive, the mark will have to put up a security deposit. These deposits range from a few to several thousand dollars. It's a judgment made by the con man after seeing the mark's home and apparent financial means.

EMPLOYMENT CON #38

This con needs the use of a "drop"-type mail receiving service. MAIL BOXES, ETC., is a good example. An answering service and newspaper advertisement are also needed. To make this con work, the con man must advertise in city newspapers at least 1,000 miles away. Most major newspapers will place a "help wanted" ad on credit. This leaves the cost of operation to a few hundred dollars. Stationary with company logo and postage stamps will incur the greatest costs.

The con man advertises worldwide construction employment. All construction positions needed, with high pay and benefits. Send resume. Replies come in by the hundreds. A letter is sent back to each of the marks stating the resume has been received and the mark is qualified for the position applied for. The letter contains information about work in various parts of the United States and several countries. Wage offers, health insurance, and numerous company benefits are explained. The con explains to the mark that there is a huge volume of replies and a decision needs to be made immediately. An interview must be set up in the next few days and the mark will be responsible to pay for travel expenses to the interview. A promise to repay travel expenses once the mark is hired is made.

The cost of air fare for a flight booked within two weeks of departure is staggering. The con knows this and will offer the mark a special rate for airfare, hotel, and rental car services.

This offer will be much less than what the mark could get and the con man explains this offer is through a travel agent used exclusively by his company. A majority of the marks will send a cash money order for the special rate immediately.

LEGAL EAGLE HOUSE CALL SCAM

The cost of attorney's fees have risen to the point that many people are turning to a paralegal for help on matters such as simple divorce, bankruptcy, and other uncomplicated matters that don't need the expensive advise of an attorney.

An advertisement is placed in a local paper stating a very low fee for legal help on these matters. A contact phone number is listed in the ad, which is an answering service. The ad further states the paralegal will visit the home, so there's no need for the mark to travel, possibly miss work, or need a baby-sitter. Meetings can also take place in the evening. Again, the only contact the mark will have with the con after the meeting is through an answering service.

When the meeting takes place, the mark is told the case can be handled easily and quickly. Everything should be completed in a few weeks. The con offers to hold back on the small personal fee until the case is completed. The only cost at this time will be for legal filing fees required by the courts. These costs must be paid in advance and must be made in cash because the courts will not accept checks. The fees required are in the \$200 to \$300 range. Cons make an average of 15 house calls per day. In three weeks' time, a single con man can make \$60,000 without much effort.

DIRTY CLOTHES CON

This con seems like a small, two-bit con, but over a period of a few months it will net the con artist a sizable amount of cash. The con man goes to a printer and has approximately

500 blank receipts printed with the logo, name, and telephone number of a dry cleaner in a nearby city. Going to a library, the con man makes a list of pricey restaurants from out-of-state phone books. The con man sends a letter to each of the restaurants stating that he and his wife had dinner there while visiting their city on business. During the dinner, the waiter spilled coffee on both the con man and his wife. The letter further explains that the burns received from the hot coffee were uncomfortable but not worth getting an attorney involved. The reason for the letter is to be reimbursed for the cleaning of a three-piece suit and cocktail dress. Enclosed with the letter will be a receipt from the dry cleaner for around \$20.

Most restaurants will automatically send a check for the amount without question.

AUTO SALES CON

It's one of the slickest cons lately and what makes it worse is, if the con man is caught, there are no criminal charges filed. Only a civil suit by the marks can be brought.

The con man rents an office with parking for approximately 20 cars. He furnishes the office and hires a secretary. After hooking up all the utilities, the next step is to place two ads in several newspapers from the surrounding area. One ad states the con man will take over payments on automobile loans. The ad is directed at people who want to get out of a car loan and save their credit. There are a multitude of people who are having trouble making auto payments and would like to get out of making them. In special cases, if the car is an expensive sports car, the con man offers a payment to the owner.

The number two ad states the con man has cars for lease. No credit check and low down payment is the meat of the ad. "Drive away in a new Corvette today."

Once the lease agreement is signed and a down payment of around \$1,500 is made, the mark drives off in a nice automobile. Payments under these type leases are usually made weekly; rarely will the payments go in monthly intervals. A payment made one day late is cause for immediate repossession. Leased vehicles are under a different set of rules from purchase agreements in most states. To further the income of this operation, payments the mark must make are usually \$50 to \$100 higher than the original note.

For the first few months, the con man makes the monthly payment for the owner, who keeps finance companies away. The new lessee is making payments and things are fine. Then the con man stops making payments and pockets the money that's supposed to go to the loan companies. In 30 days, the finance companies start writing the owners about the overdue payment. The con man satisfies the owners by stating there was a mix-up and the payment has been sent. Another two to four weeks go by, and when the owners start putting heat on the con operation, the con man leaves town. In one case, the police estimated the con made off with no less than \$350,000 in cash in four months.

STAYING ONE UP ON THE IRS

payment
nice auto-
ally made
ervals. A
reposses-
ules from
income of
ually \$50

monthly
ies away.
ne. Then
e money
days, the
he over-
y stating
Another
putting
. In one
ess than

A few years ago it was easy avoiding taxes on gambling winnings. It didn't make any difference what amount was won because casinos weren't required to record the winner's name and social security number. Times have changed. Recording your name and social security number is presently required by law, but only if your winnings total over \$1,200 for a single win at a slot machine and over \$1,500 for a single win at Keno. Nine times the bet is the IRS requirement for filing winnings on horse-race betting. If you win over these amounts, you must produce proper identification. If you can't come up with ID, you may have to forfeit the winnings.

Most states that have an income tax require a casino to withhold the state's share immediately. The IRS allows the player to take all the winnings, but a record is kept and must be reported by the winner at tax time.

Don't panic. There are several ways to get around this dilemma.

TIPPING

In smaller casinos, a generous tip to the floor man will almost always keep you from having to fill out an IRS form W-2G, even if you hit a large jackpot. A generous tip is around 10 percent of the total win.

In larger casinos, strict policies require the floor man to

keep a record of each win. This makes it difficult, but possible. Again, tipping may save the day. Some floor men will alter an IRS form by using a fake name and social security number. It's easy to approach the floor man simply by asking, "What's it going to take to keep me from paying taxes?" A floor man on the take will respond with a dollar figure. A floor man not on the take will just say no.

RECORD KEEPING

If you gamble often, your chances of winning a large amount of money are good. There are several ways to protect yourself at tax time should good fortune smile upon you. The IRS has a rule that says you cannot claim gambling losses against anything but gambling winnings. This means if you didn't win you can't deduct any losses, but if you do win, any gambling losses can be deducted against those winnings. Sound simple? It is, except for the ringer thrown in by the IRS. To deduct losses, the player must have proof of those losses. Not long ago, the IRS allowed a gambler to keep personal daily records. The IRS termed this a "gambling log." Not anymore.

The IRS will accept as proof (this is exactly as it's written in the IRS manual) wagering tickets, canceled checks, credit records, bank withdrawals, and statements of actual winnings or payment slips provided to you by the gambling establishment.

Wagering tickets. These are tickets received for bets on horses, Keno, and lotteries. To help offset winnings, look around the gambling parlor. Many gamblers leave losing tickets lying around. Picking up these tickets and saving them is as good as if you had made the bet.

Canceled checks. Getting check-cashing privileges in a casino is no harder than getting a check-cashing card at a supermarket. Once check-cashing privileges are established, cash a

check in a casino for every penny of cash needed. This includes food, hotel bills, clothing, souvenirs, and anything else. Every check cashed by a casino counts as though the money was gambled there.

Credit records. Getting casino credit is like applying for a VISA card, application for credit must be made. The player can go to the cashier and get cash once the application has been approved. Some casinos like to give out chips or tell you to go to a table game and let the pit boss issue credit there. To avoid this, tell the cashier you are playing slots. Slots use cash and once you have the cash in hand, just walk out the front door and go shopping. Every record of credit is proof of losses.

Bank withdrawals. This refers to teller machines inside casinos. This is the easiest method of all. Instead of going to a teller machine at the bank, stop at a casino and use theirs. Each withdrawal from these machines is proof of gambling losses, even if you didn't gamble a penny.

Statements. These are receipts given at table games. Blackjack, craps, poker, baccarat, roulette, and wheel of fortune are prime examples. These receipts have to be asked for. With a smile and gentle voice, suggesting to the pit boss a higher amount than what was actually bet, usually results in getting what you asked for.

A True Story

An associate of mine was a heavy horse player. He also liked to play Keno while watching the horse race results. One day his ship came in and he won more than \$100,000. This was early November and he hadn't kept any records of betting all year. In a frantic move to collect over \$100,000 in losing receipts, he began going around collecting losing horse race and Keno tickets from every casino in Vegas. In a month and a half he had what he needed and stored them in several shoe boxes.

A few years later he was audited by the IRS. No problem.

He took the shoe boxes full of losing tickets along and presented them to the auditor. Upon examination of the losing tickets, the auditor found footprints on several tickets. The IRS declined to accept any tickets as proof of gambling losses.

and pre-
he losing
kets. The
ng losses.

GLOSSARY

- ABOVE BOARD:** Being honest. On the up and up. "He's being straight, everything he does is above board." Also used to identify winnings a casino reports to the IRS.
- ACE:** An excellent person. "He's an all right guy, a real ace." A very skillful person or expert. "He's a real ace at poker." The highest card in poker. A dollar bill. Counts as one or eleven in blackjack. The number one on a die.
- ACE IN THE HOLE:** Having an ace dealt down in the game of stud. Having an advantage. Having knowledge your opponent does not have. "I know I'll beat him, I've got an ace in the hole."
- ACE KICKER:** Draw poker term. The player holds an ace along with another pair in hopes of drawing another ace.
- ACE TO FIVE:** The lowest hand in low ball. The smallest possible straight in poker. The ace, deuce, trey, four, and five.
- ACES UP:** Term used when a poker player has two pairs and one of the pairs is aces. "I've got aces up."
- ACEY-DUCEY:** Game of chance where a player's card must be in between two cards dealt face up. Game is also known as in between and red dog.
- ACROSS THE BOARD:** Term used by horse bettors meaning to bet the same amount on all three places (win, place, and show). "I want to bet a hundred across the board." (This would cost the bettor \$300.)
- ACT:** Term used by poker dealers to remind a player it's their turn. "It's your turn to act, sir."
- ACTION:** Gambling activity. Betting. Term used when a player wants to enter a game or part of a wager. "I want a piece of that action." Used to describe a style of gambling. "It's a good money game, lots of action."
- ADDICT:** A gambler who continues to play the same games over and over, even though he never wins.
- ADVANCE MAN:** An agent who is assigned to look for new territory and find

THE PROFESSIONAL GAMBLER'S HANDBOOK

- new marks. This could mean a new neighborhood, town, or state. "We're getting to be well-known around here; better send an advance man to find new territory."
- AGENT:** A person acting as a confederate in a crooked game. Also considered to be an inside man or person who works together with dealers and floor men to cheat players or the house.
- ALIBI AGENT:** An operator of a crooked carnival game. Is excellent at instructing marks during the course of the game.
- ALIBI STORE:** Label for any carnival game that is so crooked there is no possible chance of a mark winning.
- ALL IN:** A poker term usually reserved for a table stakes game and used by a player who is betting the last of his chips or money. "I call that last bet and I'm all in."
- ANCHOR or ANCHOR MAN:** Player who is playing last at a blackjack table. Also known as playing third base.
- ANGLE:** A scheme concocted by agents, confederates, and confidence men to cheat marks out of their money. "That last con didn't work too well; let's try a new angle."
- ANTE:** In a poker game requiring antes, the ante is a forced bet all players make prior to any cards being dealt. The size of the ante is usually determined by the maximum amount of money allowed to be bet during the first round of betting.
- AUDITION:** Term used to describe the tryout professional dealers go through to prove their skills for employment.
- BACK ALLEY:** Used in reference to an illegal craps game being played outside the rear of a business, usually a tavern.
- BACK DOOR:** A dishonest gambling house. Term used in Texas Hold 'Em to describe a player making the best hand on the final card. "I had the best hand, then he beat me at the back door." This card is also referred to as the "river card."
- BACKER:** Person or persons who bankroll a gambling operation. "So, who's backing your action now?"
- BAD BEAT:** A poker term used by a player who has just had a high hand beaten by a higher hand. "I took a real bad beat, had four fours and he had four tens."
- BAD PAPER:** Counterfeit money. "Someone put some bad paper in the game."
- BAGGAGE:** A person standing around watching a game but has no money to get into the action. A person who stands around a game and begs for money to enter the game.

- BAGGED:** To be caught in the act of cheating. "I was bagged by the cops."
- BAG MAN:** A person who carries gambling winnings from a house to a drop site. Used to describe an employee of a gambling syndicate whose job it is to pick up winnings from bookies and deliver them to a drop site.
- BAIT:** A large roll of bills used to lure a mark into a con game. Usually a large bill surrounding several one-dollar bills.
- BALL THE JACK:** Early gambling term meaning to "bet it all" on a single roll of the dice.
- BANANA HEAD:** A foolish gambler. A buffoon playing in a game. "He's a real banana head."
- BANKABLE:** A gambler with a good reputation. One who pays back gambling debts on time. "It's OK to loan him the money; he's bankable." An excellent gambler.
- BANKROLL:** To finance a gambling operation. "I'll bankroll your action."
- BARKER:** A carnie whose main job is to entice people passing by to try their luck on a game or to enter a sideshow.
- BAT CARRIER:** A person who leads police to a gambling operation. A stoolie.
- BEAN(S):** A poker chip. "I'll bet five beans." Not usually used around legal gambling houses.
- BEAT:** The act of cheating. To win by cheating. Stealing. "I beat the mark out of his money."
- BEAT FEET:** Leave the con game as quickly as possible.
- BEEF:** Complaining, especially about being cheated. "I got a beef with that guy. I think he cheated me." A criminal charge.
- BEEFER:** A person continually complaining about being cheated. "That guy was a real beeper."
- BELLY JOINT:** Usually referring to carnival games where the game operator uses his stomach to control the wheel or other gaming devices.
- BELOW:** Winnings not reported to the IRS.
- BENJY:** A \$20 bill.
- BET:** A wager. Money or chips placed on a game of chance. A single wager in a poker game. A single wager on a horse race. "I'll bet \$20 on the fifth horse in the third race at Hollywood Park."
- BET THE HOUSE (RENT):** A term used when trying to persuade another that the bet about to be made is a sure thing. "You can bet the house on this one." Used to describe a large bet. "I bet the rent."
- BETTING BLIND:** Betting on a poker hand without the benefit of looking at any of the hole cards. "I'll bet \$5 blind."
- BETTING ON THE FLY:** A cheating move used in craps. This is a call bet by a confederate and is called after the dice have landed.
- BEVELS:** Dice being used in a craps game that have rounded edges.

- BIG BLIND:** The largest of blind wagers placed prior to starting a hand in Texas Hold 'Em.
- BIG CON:** Cheating for large amounts of money. Big cons are usually planned well in advance and use several agents and a store.
- BIG DICK:** Craps term for the number 10. "Come on big dick."
- BIG NICKEL:** A \$500 or a \$5,000 bet, depending on the geographical area. "I bet the big nickel on that race."
- BIG SLICK:** Refers to the ace and king being the two cards dealt to a Hold 'Em player. In some poker circles, big slick refers to the ace and king of spades only. Depending on who the professional you're talking to at the time, big slick is the best possible hand to have dealt. Others say two aces is the best.
- BILK:** Taking money by cheating. "I bilked him out of a thousand."
- BILL:** \$100. "I beat him out of a bill."
- BIRD DOG:** A member of a con game who has been sent to look for more marks. "The game is dying down. Go bird dog for a while."
- BIT:** Associated with small-change betting. Two bits (a quarter), four bits (a half dollar), and six bits (75 cents). "I'll bet you two bits he can't do it."
- BITE:** Gamblers' term for borrowing money from someone other than a loan shark. "I put the bite on him for a hundred."
- BLAB:** To talk to an outsider. To ruin a con game by excessive talking. "We had to quit; he wouldn't stop blabbing."
- BLACK CHIP:** A gaming chip worth \$100.
- BLACKJACK (21):** Name given a casino card game in which the player tries to get as close as possible to 21 points without going over. The player wins when having a higher point value than the dealer or the dealer goes over 21. An ace and any card with the value of ten on the first two cards.
- BLACK LINING:** Using a sharp instrument to make small cuts along the boards of face cards, which can be felt by the dealer as cards are dealt.
- BLACK MONEY:** Money made from illegal acts. Includes gambling, loan sharking, prostitution, and con games.
- BLANK CHECK:** A term used to describe a gambler who pays back large gambling loans. "He's good for it; you can give him a blank check."
- BLEAT:** To cry or complain about being cheated. Constant complaining after being fleeced. "Did you hear that guy bleat after we took his money?"
- BLOCK OUTS:** Covering small white areas on the back of playing cards using similar colored ink used by the manufacturer.
- BLOW:** Get out. Run away from a con game, usually because the police are coming. "Let's hurry up and blow this place." A term used for losing money. "How much did you blow last night?"

- BLOWER:** A crap shooter who puffs air into his closed fist containing the dice just prior to throwing them. Sometimes a female companion will perform the puffing duties just for luck.
- BLOWN MONEY:** Money lost to gambling.
- BLOW OFF:** Attempting to make a mark leave a game. To make a mark feel unwanted after he has lost all his money.
- BLUFF:** Attempting to fool other poker players into believing you have the best hand when actually your hand is worthless.
- BOGUS:** A crooked game. "They run a bogus card game." Counterfeit money. "The cash he gave me was bogus."
- BOILER ROOM:** An operation involving telephone solicitation. Salesmen call prospective customers and offer merchandise or prizes when actually there aren't any.
- BONES:** Name given to the dice in a craps game. "Come on, roll them bones."
- BOOK (Bookie):** A person who receives illegal gambling wagers. Usually associated with sports and horse race betting. "I called my book and placed a bill on the Dodgers."
- BOOSTERS:** Employees of a big con whose actual role is very small compared to the all around "big picture."
- BOTTOM DEALER:** A dealer who deals cards from the bottom of the deck.
- BOWL:** The part of a roulette table that holds the wheel.
- BOX:** The place at a poker table designated as the dealer's seat. The seat occupied by the person in charge of a craps game. A poker term used to define one part of a dealer's shuffle.
- BOX CARS:** The number 12 in craps. "He rolled box cars."
- BOXED CARD:** A card turned face up in a deck that is about to be dealt.
- BOX MAN:** The dealer in charge of a craps game, who is positioned at the center of the table sitting down.
- BREAK IN:** A term used to identify a novice poker, blackjack, or craps dealer. "Give him a break, he's just a break in."
- BREAK IN HOUSE:** A gambling establishment that hires inexperienced dealers.
- BREAK THE BANK:** Term used by casinos when a player wins enough to empty a slot machine. "Congratulations, you broke the bank." A term used when a gambler wins more money than the house can pay.
- BRICK:** A die that has been altered with weights.
- BROADS:** The three queens used primarily in three-card monte.
- BROAD TOSSER:** The dealer handling the three queens in a three-card monte game.
- BROAD TOSSING MOB:** All the people connected with the operation of a three-card monte game.
- BRUSH:** A poker room employee whose duties include cleaning poker tables

of unwanted debris, seating players, running chips, getting dealers' setups, and approaching persons passing the card room in an attempt to get them to play.

BUG: A device placed under a roulette wheel that keeps specific numbers from coming into play. A device placed under poker or blackjack tables in which cards are stored until they are ready to enter a game.

BUILD-UP: A speech designed specifically for a mark in order to get him excited about gambling his money.

BUM MOVE: A stupid or unwanted move made by a con artist that results in his being caught cheating or losing the mark. "He left the game after that bum move I made."

BUM STEER: Giving bad or bogus advice. Giving worthless information. Giving wrong directions. "He gave me a bum steer."

BUNCO: A police term describing a crooked game. "He's in charge of the bunco squad." A swindling game.

BUNDLE: A large amount of money. A term used to express a large loss of money. "I lost a bundle last night."

BURN CARD: The top card used as protection from exposing cards to players after each round of dealing during a hand. Prior to dealing the next round of cards, the dealer buries the burn card face down next to the muck.

BURNED: Being cheated. "Man, did I ever get burned."

BURNER: Leader of a con game.

BUST: Losing an entire bankroll. "I got into a craps game last night and went bust." Ending up with a total higher than 21 in a blackjack game.

BUSTERS (Bust outs): Dice entered into a crap game that have been altered so that only certain numbers will come up.

BUST IN: Getting crooked dice into the game.

BUSTING BALLS: A heavy gambler who's beating the house out of a large sum of money. "He's busting our balls." A player continually griping to a floor man about players or dealers. A floor man might reply, "Quit busting my balls."

BUST OUT: To go broke in a game. To cheat a player out of all his money. The final play in a con game, usually associated with a sting.

BUST OUT HOUSE: A gambling establishment that uses cheating methods.

BUST OUT MAN: A dealer skilled in getting crooked dice into a craps game.

BUTTON GAME: The arrival of fake police. Through no fault of his own, the mark is allowed to escape thinking he was lucky to get away.

BUY IN: The minimum amount of money needed to enter a poker game.

C-NOTE: A \$100 bill.

CAKLE BLADDER: A balloon filled with animal blood that bursts during a

mock knife or gunfight. This is used to scare off a mark and make him feel lucky he escaped uninjured.

CACKLE THE DICE: Making the dice click together but not allowing them to change positions in the hand prior to rolling them.

CAGE: The casino cashier. A casino change booth. The area of a casino that contains the casino vault.

CALL: Placing a poker bet that is exactly the same size bet of another player. "I call."

CALL BET: Verbal announcement of a bet made by a craps player.

CANDLE: The name given a light on top of a slot machine.

CANE: Term given the stick used by a craps dealer to collect the dice or move the dice about the table.

CAPPER: A carnival helper.

CAPPING: A term used primarily in blackjack or craps that means a player has added chips to a bet after the cards have been dealt. "After he looked at his cards, I saw him cap his bet."

CARD SHARP: An excellent card player. A professional card player who uses unethical means to win.

CARD TEAM: Two or more players in the same game acting as confederates.

CARNIES: Carnival employees.

CARNIVAL: An established schedule of amusement. A wandering venture offering amusement and exhibits.

CASE CARD: The fourth card of one numerical value to be dealt, with the other three exposed to the view of all players. Usually used to define the case ace. "The other three aces were out; I was surprised when I caught the case ace."

CASE NOTE: A \$1 bill.

CASE OUT: To share gambling winnings with others.

CASH IN: Quitting a game and redeeming chips for cash. "I had enough so I decided to cash in."

CASH OUT: Quitting a game and redeeming chips for cash. "I quit; I'm going to cash out."

CASINO HOST: in charge of welcoming casino guests. Duties include acquainting new guests with casino games, policies, shows, and other entertainment.

CHANGE: Cash. Winnings. "That was some nice piece of change I made today."

CHART: A log horse race bettors make to keep track of a horse or jockey's past performance.

CHECK COPPER: A player who uses a sticky substance in his hand to steal chips from the pot or from another player's stack.

CHECKS: The gambling term for poker chips. This term applies to all other games using chips instead of cash.

- CHEESE IT:** Term used to warn others in a con game that the authorities have arrived. "Cheese it!"
- CHICKEN FEED:** Term used to describe a low-limit game. Small winnings. "What I won today is chicken feed compared to what I usually win."
- CHINESE STRAIGHT:** A worthless poker hand. Usually describes a four-card straight with the card needed being on the inside. Example: four, six, seven, eight. The card needed is the five.
- CHIPPY:** A very poor player.
- CHISEL:** To cheat. "I'll chisel him out of his money."
- CHUMP:** A carnival term for idiot. Loser at all carnival games. Spends all available money on carnival games but rarely wins anything.
- CLAIM AGENT:** A horse bettor who continually claims to have picked a winning horse but can't seem to find the ticket.
- CLASS ACT:** A gambler who acts like a gentleman and is a generous tipper. "He's a class act." Same as being "first class."
- CLEANED OUT:** Lost all available money to gambling. Broke because of gambling. "Bad day; I'm cleaned out."
- CLEM:** A serious disagreement between carnival people. Signal between carnival people to be ready for a fight with an angry mob of townspeople. "We got a clem on our hands!"
- CLIP:** To cheat. "We clipped him."
- CLIP JOINT:** A crooked gambling establishment. "The Harbor Club is a clip joint."
- CLOSE OUT:** Keeping a prospective player from placing a bet. Not allowing a person to get close to the game. Used primarily to keep unwanted people away from a three-card monte game.
- CLOUT:** Having influence with police or other officials. "He's got a lot of clout downtown."
- CLUB:** A gambling house. "See ya over at the club." Suit in a deck of cards. "I need the seven of clubs for my straight flush."
- COLD CASH:** Currency. Real money. No checks or I.O.U.s. "I beat you fair; I want to be paid in cold cash."
- COLD DECK:** A deck that has been arranged prior to being introduced into a game. Usually rigged to give a mark a very high hand, but giving a confederate a higher hand.
- COLD DECKER:** A person who cheats, lies, and is crooked when it comes to gambling matters. Not necessarily a person who sets up cold decks.
- COLD HAUL:** To cheat someone out of all their available cash or valuables. "I gave him the cold haul."
- COMING CLEAN:** Telling the authorities everything about an operation during questioning. "By coming clean they promised not to throw me in jail."

- COMP:** Short for complimentary. A gift for doing business in a gambling establishment. Free meals, lodging, or show tickets given in appreciation. In some cases airfare, lodging, and meals will be provided free, for a future return. "After a few hours of gambling, the floor man gave us a comp to dinner."
- CON:** Abbreviation for confidence man. "He's a con man." A crooked game. "The game was a con." A plan to cheat. "This game will con them out of their money."
- CON ARTIST:** A person who is excellent at cheating others out of money. "Joe's a great con artist."
- CONFIDENCE GAME:** A con that usually takes time to pull off. The con artist must first gain complete trust of the intended mark.
- CON GAME:** A game designed specifically for cheating others out of their money.
- CON JOB:** The art of selling a crooked game to a mark.
- CON MAN:** A swindler. A person who cheats. A person who designs and plans games to cheat people out of their money.
- CONVICT:** Carnival word for Zebra.
- COME OUT ROLL:** First roll of the dice prior to a point being made.
- COME THROUGH:** A mark that refuses to leave, complains, and demands his losses returned.
- CONNECTIONS:** Knowing people who are in high places of gaming or law enforcement who will allow a crooked game to run smoothly. "We won't have any problem running the con here; I've got connections."
- COOKING THE BOOKS:** Falsifying income records to avoid paying taxes. Illegal bookkeeping. Burning evidence of book making, or other illegal activity just prior to a raid.
- COOLER:** A deck of cards prearranged to give a mark a very high hand, but the confederate will have a better hand.
- COOL OUT:** Calming down an irate mark.
- COOPERATIVE ARREST:** An arrangement between police and operators of an illegal house to have some of the operators arrested. Usually done to please complaining townspeople. Also done in front of a mark to frighten him into leaving without causing trouble or complaining to authorities.
- COPPER:** Betting against the odds. To place a bet in opposition to someone else who is an expert.
- COPPER A TIP:** Betting against very strong odds. Betting against exceptionally good advice.
- COPPER-HEARTED:** Untrustworthy person. Someone likely to turn you in to authorities. "Don't trust her, she's copper-hearted."
- COWBOY:** A player who plays fast and out of control.

- CRACKDOWN:** A period of time police or officials put a temporary stop to gambling activities. Usually just prior to an election as proof to a community a good job is being done.
- CRAP:** in a craps game, the numbers two, three, and twelve. Unsavory residue.
- CRAPS:** A game of chance determined by the throwing of dice. A banking dice game.
- CREEPER:** A carnival wheel rigged for cheating.
- CREEP JOINT:** A gambling house that periodically changes locations to avoid being detected by authorities.
- CRIMP:** A bend down the center of a card. A bend on cards, such as a dog-ear. Usually associated with the bends on cards used in three-card monte.
- CROAKER:** Carnies' word for a doctor. "I'm not feeling too good. Take me to town to see the croaker."
- CROOKED:** To be dishonest. A thief. Unscrupulous. "He's as crooked as a dog's hind leg."
- CROSS:** Making a mark feel as though he's part of the con when really he's the patsy.
- CROSS ROADER:** A person excellent at cheating slot machines.
- CUT AND RUN:** Stop the con and leave immediately, usually just prior to a raid. "The cops are coming, cut and run!"
- CUT CARD:** Usually a colored plastic card offered to a player to cut the deck(s) in a blackjack game. In poker it's a thick plastic card that stays at the bottom of the deck during the entire hand. This protects the bottom card from being exposed and makes it extremely difficult for the dealer to deal from the bottom of the deck.
- CUT IN:** A demand to be given a share of gambling or con game profits. Usually done with a strong-arm attitude. "You've been working my territory, I want a piece of the action you made last night."
- CUT OUT:** Purposely keeping a member of the con from receiving their fair share. "I didn't like his attitude, so I cut out part of his share."
- CUTTHROAT:** A disreputable person who goes after marks and anyone else in a rough or vicious manner. A gambler with very few scruples and doesn't care who knows. Not to be admired.
- CUTTING THE CARDS:** Separating a deck of cards, then placing the part that was on the bottom on top.
- CUTTING UP THE SCORE:** Splitting the winnings made from a con operation.
- CUT UP OLD SCORES:** Con men getting together to reminisce about old scores and con games.

- D:** A \$1 bill.
- DAUBING:** Using colored ink to mark cards during play.
- DEADHEAD:** A player or mark with very little money. "Bust him out quick, he's a deadhead." A low-limit player.
- DEAD MAN'S HAND:** Poker term describing two pairs, aces and eights. It's rumored that Wild Bill Hickock was killed during a poker game and this is the hand he was holding at the time.
- DEALER:** A person provided by the house to deal poker, craps, baccarat, roulette, and any other house games. In foreign casinos and American casinos requiring players to wear formal attire, the dealer is known as a "croupier" (pronounced crew-pee-a).
- DECK:** A complete set of 52 standard playing cards.
- DESPERADO:** A person who gambles far more than he can afford. One deep in gambling debt. A poor risk to loan money. A person who wishes not to pay back gambling debts and skips town when asked to pay.
- DEUCE:** Any of the four cards in a deck with the numerical value of two. "I've got three deuces."
- DEUCER:** A \$2 bill. "I'll bet a deucer." Usually used around racetracks.
- DICE CAPPER:** A person who makes loaded dice. A person who uses loaded dice.
- DIE:** One of a pair of dice.
- DIME:** A \$1,000 bet. "I'll place a dime on number five in the fifth."
- DIME DROPPER:** A police informant. A tattletale to officials.
- DIME NOTE:** A \$10 bill.
- DIPSY DOODLE:** A fraud. A fixed prizefight. A con artist. "He's a dipsy doodle."
- DIRTY POOL:** A term used for underhanded or cheating types of play. "Don't trust him, he plays dirty pool."
- DOG:** A gambler who gives up play easily. A scared player. "Look at him, he plays like a dog."
- DOG-EARED:** Term given to a card that has been bent or creased on one or more of its corners. Worn-out or damaged cards. "Get a new deck and get rid of those dog-eared cards."
- DOUBLE-CROSS:** The art of making a mark feel like he is part of the plan when actually he is the one being taken. Same as cross. "The con came off great; we double-crossed him."
- DOUBLE DEAL:** Dealing two cards instead of one. In a legitimate card game this will usually end in a misdeal or will kill the player's hand receiving the two cards.
- DOUBLE FIVE:** A die that has two fives instead of one.
- DOUBLE SAWBUCK:** A \$20 bill.
- DOWN AND DIRTY:** Remark made by back room dealers as the last card of a stud game is dealt. "Here's the last card, down and dirty."

- DRAG:** To remove chips from a bet once the cards have been dealt.
- DRAW POKER:** A poker game involving the discard of unwanted cards and drawing a like amount from the unused portion of the deck. Once a very popular game but has lost its appeal.
- DRILL:** The process of drilling holes in dice for the purpose of weighing them down. Drilling small holes in slot machines to control the reels.
- DROP:** The portion of a pot taken as the house cut. This money is usually placed in a slot in the table next to the dealer, which drops into a locked receptacle. Houses use this term when relating to the amount of money made during a shift or 24-hour period. "Last night's drop was 10 grand." A term given a location where gambling proceeds are deposited. In slot terms it's collecting and counting slot machine revenues.
- DROP SHOT:** A trick used to control the dice while being thrown.
- DRUG STORE RACE:** A horse race in which one of the horses has been given drugs prior to racing.
- DRY:** No money. "I can't play, I'm dry."
- DUKE:** The art of short-changing a mark, usually by palming a coin or holding out a bill during a cash exchange.
- DUMPER:** A gambler who gambles in an irregular fashion. Gambles with no apparent idea of what he's doing.
- DUMP SHOT:** A trick used to hold out dice that should have gone back into a dice cup. Usually used in tavern games that use a dice cup and five or six dice.
- EAR:** Putting a bend or crimp on the corner of a card so it can be easily identified during a game. "There's an ear on the ace of spades."
- EASY MARK:** A person who is easily persuaded to play a con game or gamble in a game he has no chance of winning. "Get him into the game; he's an easy mark."
- EDGE WORK:** Cutting or sanding the edges of dice or cards.
- EGG:** A term given an easy mark. "I played him last night; he's a real egg."
- EIGHT BALL:** An idiot at gambling. A buffoon of a gambler. House employees are constantly talking about him behind his back and laughing at his manners.
- EIGHTER FROM DECATUR:** Phrase used by a craps shooter just prior to rolling the dice when the number he needs to win is eight. "Come on eighter from Decatur."
- EIGHTY-FIVE:** One step short of being eighty-sixed (from cards passed out by a Las Vegas bartender).
- EIGHTY-SIXED:** To be thrown out of a gambling establishment and told

never to return. "He can't come in here, he's been eighty-sixed." (From the 86th Law of the Nevada Revised Statutes.)

EVEN SPLITTERS: Dice that have been altered so that only even numbers will come up after being rolled. These dice are usually brought into a game after a point has been made.

FADE: Covering another player's action in a craps game. Usually associated with an alley or back room private game.

FAIRBANK (Fairbanking): Cheating so the mark wins, which in turn builds the mark's confidence and makes him feel that he has a real chance of winning big.

FALSE CUT: An action by a dealer that leads the players to believe the cards have been cut when they actually haven't. Used primarily with a cold deck.

FAST COMPANY: Gambling with excellent professional gamblers. "He likes to gamble in fast company."

FEVER: The number five in craps. "Come on little fever."

FIELD SPLITTERS: Dice that have been altered so when rolled will rarely come up as field numbers. (Field numbers are usually two, three, four, nine, ten, eleven, and twelve.)

FILL: Replacing chips in the dealer's box which were previously purchased by players.

FIN: A \$5 bill.

FINGER: Pointing out or telling on a person or house running a crooked game, usually to police or persons of authority. "I caught him cheating, so I fingered him to the police."

FIRST BASE PEAK: A player who sits to the left of a blackjack dealer and positions himself to easily peak at the dealer's hole card.

FIRST OF MAY: Carnival term for a new employee. "You can tell he's a first of May because he doesn't know what he's doing." Start of carnival season.

FIVE SPOT: A \$5 bill.

FIX: Manipulating a game. A con. A bribe to police or others in authority.

FIXER: An agent who has connections in city hall. A person who pays officials to look the other way during a con operation. A lawyer representing carnies.

FIX IS ON: Phrase used when it is all right to proceed with a con or crooked game. "It's OK boys, go ahead, the fix is on."

FLASH: Expensive prizes displayed by carnies to attract customers. These types of prizes are very rarely won.

FLAT: A carnival card game played for money, not prizes.

- FLATS:** Dice that have been shaved on one or more sides.
- FLEECE:** A term used when describing a mark who has been taken for all the money he has. "We didn't just take him, we fleeced him."
- FLIMFLAM:** All types of cons or dishonest games played for money.
- FLIMFLAM MAN:** A person who flim flams.
- FLOATING CRAP GAME:** A craps game that moves at regular intervals to keep from being detected by police or other officials. Locations of each game are usually phoned to prospective customers just prior to opening.
- FLOOR MAN:** A person employed by the house whose duties usually include the supervision of dealers and making decisions concerning gamblers' play or mistakes by a dealer.
- FLUSH:** To have a large amount of money on one's person. "How you doing for cash?" "I'm flush."
- FOLD:** Term used by a poker player to inform the other players he no longer wishes to play his hand. "I fold." A player turning all of his face-up cards face down has folded his hand. Not wishing to call a bet or a raise.
- FOUR BITS:** 50 cents.
- FOUR FLUSHER:** Term given a cheat who tries to pass off four cards of one suit as a five-card flush.
- FREEWHEELING:** Term given older type slot machines whose reels turned freely until the machine's timing mechanism releases pins to stop the reels.
- FRETS:** The metal fins separating the numbers on a roulette wheel. These hold the ball once the ball drops.
- FRONT MAN:** A person who bankrolls a gambling operation.
- FUR FLY:** Making a commotion to distract bystanders who appear to be catching on to the con.
-
- G-NOTE:** A \$1,000 bill.
- GAFF:** A gambling device rigged to cheat. Usually rigged so the customer never wins. To shortchange.
- GAFFER:** A con who operates bogus slot machines.
- GAMBLER:** A person who wagers money or valuables on events with no known outcome. Taking unnecessary risks. Risking money on games of chance.
- GEEK:** A carnival employee who uses despicable acts to entertain customers. Usually a grotesque-looking person. "Our geek swallows live bats."
- GEORGE:** A word used by one dealer to another to identify a person who is a big tipper. "Take good care of him, he's a George."
- GETAWAY DAY:** The final day of horse racing for the season.

- GLEANING:** Gathering cards together in preparation for dealing seconds.
- GO FOR THE MONEY:** Phrase used when it's all right to proceed with a con. "Everything is in place, go for the money."
- GOING LIGHT:** Calling a poker bet and not having enough money on the table to do so. Not having enough money to call a bet but wish to have the players take a marker. "I'll call the bet but I'm going light \$10."
- GOLD BICKER:** Someone who is a cheat, liar, trickster, and operator of con games.
- GO SOUTH:** Taking money, cards, dice, or other gambling devices off the table. To leave town in a hurry. Go into hiding. "The cops are looking for you, better go south for a while."
- GRAB JOINT:** A carnival booth that sells toys, prizes, food, souvenirs, and other items.
- GRAND:** \$1,000. "I'm stuck in the game for a grand."
- GREASE:** Money used to bribe police or other officials.
- GREEN CHIP:** A gaming token worth \$25.
- GREYHOUND:** A carnival employee who is proficient at fast-talking customers into spending their money.
- GRIFF:** Taking money dishonestly.
- GRIFFER:** One who grafts. A person titled a grifter is one who dishonestly takes money from marks but never uses violence.
- GRINDER:** A carnival employee whose main duty is to entice customers into playing midway games, using a hard sell method.
- GROUCH:** A bag, usually leather, carried by carnival employees that contains money and other valuables.
- GYP JOINT:** A house that uses cheating methods.
-
- HALF A BILL:** A \$50 bill.
- HALF A YARD:** A \$50 bill.
- HAND:** One complete game or round of poker. One round or deal of blackjack. Each game, round, or deal is over when all money due players has been awarded.
- HANDBOOK:** A bookie joint. A house where illegal sports and race wagers are made.
- HANDLE:** Cash taken in for an illegal gaming operation and tabulated on a daily basis. "Today's handle was 10 grand."
- HANG THE FLAG:** A signal used by cons to warn others that security is tight. Signaling others that officials not on the take are in the area.
- HANKY PANK(S):** An inexpensive carnival game. One that usually ends with each player winning a cheap prize. Games that require a number of cheap prizes to be accumulated and then traded for bigger prizes.

HANKY PANKY: Term given almost any type of con. "Those guys got some real hanky panky going on."

HARD CASH: Real money. Currency. Same as cold cash. No checks or I.O.U.s.

HARD-WAY: A craps term meaning each die has identical numbers to total a pass number of four, six, eight, or ten. Two deuces equal a hard-way four. Two treys equal a hard-way six. Two fours equal a hard-way eight. Two fives equal a hard-way ten.

HATCHET MEN: Musclemen hired to intimidate people operating a rival gaming or con operation. Persons hired to destroy property owned by rival gaming or con operators. In more serious situations, these people are called upon to assassinate rival operators.

HEAD TO HEAD: In poker it's two players betting against each other. In blackjack it's one player against the dealer.

HEAT: Police, security, gaming officials, or other authorities.

HEAVY DECK: A deck of cards containing more than the customary 52.

HEAVY MONEY: Large amounts of cash. A big game with players having large sums of money. "The game's got heavy money."

HEDGE (Hedging): Generally associated with sports betting, it's placing wagers on opposite teams already bet on to defray possible losses due to several different changes, such as point spreads, key injuries to players, player trades, weather conditions, and so on. Bets made by one bookie to another to offset possible losses.

HEEL: A jerk. Usually used by a female gambler to describe an unsavory or a not so tactful male gambler.

HIGH ROLLER: A gambler who bets large sums of money. One who bets the limit. A gambler who, while not gambling, treats friends and associates to fine dinners and shows.

HIPPOED: Having been swindled. "I just got hippoed." Short for hippopotamus.

HIT: Blackjack term meaning to take an additional card in an attempt to improve the hand.

HITS: Altered dice.

HOLDING THE BAG: Manipulating a mark so he will take the blame for a raided con game. "We left him holding the bag." Fooling another gambler into taking all the losses.

HOLD OUT: A con who cheats other cons out of their true share of winnings earned in a con operation. A card removed from a deck by a dealer so it cannot be used in play.

HOLD OUT SHOE: A blackjack shoe that has been altered so the dealer can easily deal seconds or withhold certain cards from play.

HOLD OUT TABLE: A gaming table that has been designed to hide cards being withheld by the dealer. Dealers can also easily re-enter cards withheld to keep from being detected.

- HOLE CARD(S):** The card a blackjack dealer deals himself face down. Cards that have been dealt face down to players in a poker game.
- HOOK:** The act of bringing a mark into a game. "See the guy in the blue shirt and brown hat? Hook him."
- HOPPER:** A tub, shaped like a bowl that holds coins in a slot machine. Coins are dispensed from the hopper when winnings are more than the amount of coins being held in the shoot. When hoppers are full of coins, coins spill over and fall into a holding pan under the machine.
- HORSES:** A pair of altered dice.
- HOSE (Hosed, Hoser):** A deceitful person. One who cheats. "Watch out for him; he's a hoser." Getting hosed is to be seriously beaten at gambling. "I took a hosing last night."
- HOT COME ON:** A con operation where the mark knows instantly he's been cheated.
- HOT HOUSE:** A gambling house being watched by police or other officials.
- HOT SCORE:** Having taken money from a mark who complained about being cheated during the con.
- HOUSE:** Any establishment used for gambling purposes. Includes major casinos as well as back room operations.
- HUSH MONEY:** Money paid to someone to keep quiet about their knowledge of illegal activity. Money paid to keep someone from going to the authorities with incriminating information.
- HUSTLER:** A professional con man. Expert billiard player who plays just good enough to win.
- HYPE:** A con man's verbal buildup of a scam. Promoting a confidence game using exaggerated tales.
- IDIOT CON:** A con game that takes little effort and not much thought.
- IN CAHOOTS:** A very western term for being "inside" on a con. "I'm in cahoots with the house."
- IN PLAY:** Money placed that allows the player action in the game. When a dealer declares, "Bet!" Money bet on a game before it starts, usually associated with craps. In roulette, money placed prior to the ball dropping. In Big Six, money placed prior to the wheel spinning.
- INSIDE MAN:** Someone working inside a house who is willing to offer services to pull a con. This type of person is needed in order to pull a con on major casinos. The inside men usually include floor men and security personnel.
- IN THE BAG:** Phrase used when the fix is on. Easy con. "Don't worry, it's in the bag."
- IN THE CHIPS:** Having won a large amount of money. "I just took him for five grand; I'm in the chips."

\

JACK: Money. "No problem getting into the big game, I've got plenty of jack."

JACKPOT: A large win. "I hit the jackpot this time." The largest prize on a particular slot machine. Top prize.

JAY: An easy mark. Someone who gives up money easily. A loser who doesn't complain.

JOGGING: Marking the place in a deck the dealer wants to start the shuffle or deal.

JOINT: A gambling house. "I hear Joe's opening up a new joint."

JOSTLE: Picking pockets in carnival crowds.

JUICE: Loan money interest paid to a loan shark. "The juice on my loan is 50 a week." Personally knowing someone in a position of high authority at a gambling house. "I got juice at the Mirage."

JUICE JOINT: A gambling house that uses loaded dice and a magnet to control the rolls of the dice.

JUICE MAN: Someone who collects interest money due for loan sharks. "He's late on his payment; send the juice man to see him."

KANGAROO COURT: A false court that has been readily assembled to play heavy fines on carnival people. A court of self-appointed citizens who prosecute and fine without due process of law.

KICKBACK: Pay off to someone as a reward for sending a mark into a game. Baiting a mark to return by giving back some of the money he lost. "He'll have lots more money tomorrow; kick back a few bucks." Money paid to local officials for looking the other way after the con is over.

KILLING: Term used to define a large amount of money made quickly. "I made a killing this afternoon."

KNOCKING A MARK: informing a mark he has been taken.

KNOCK OUT: A term used to identify a crooked dealer or house who has swindled a mark out of every penny the mark had on him. "The guy's got no mercy; he's a knock out." Term whispered to a dealer when it's all right to go ahead and bust a mark out.

LARRY: Worthless carnival prizes. Cheap or worthless merchandise sold on the carnival midway. "He's got Larry on the shelf."

LAY: Craps term for wager. "I'll lay 10 on the hard eight."

LAY DOWN: A bet in craps or blackjack.

LAY OFF: Wager money one bookie passes on to another to reduce possible losses. "I had to lay off 50 Gs when the spread changed on Chicago."

- LAY OUT:** Term given the numbered felt covering on a craps table.
- LEAD JOINT:** Carnival games that use firearms in the contest. A shooting gallery.
- LEAK:** A poor move by a con man usually ending in the mark spotting the con game. "There was a leak, that's why the mark took off."
- LEECH:** A gambler regularly asking for money or favors with the idea it never has to be paid back. "Who's he leaching off now?"
- LEFT HOLDING THE BAG:** See "holding the bag."
- LEG MAN:** A carnival employee whose main duties are to run errands for other carnival employees. "Send the leg man for coffee."
- LEGIT:** An honest game, house, or any other type of operation that is straight. Short for legitimate. "He's an OK dealer; he's legit."
- LET IT RIDE:** Craps term meaning to replay the original bet and prior winnings.
- LEVEL:** Same as legit. "He's on the level." Making a true statement. "This story is on the level."
- LIFT:** To steal. Picking someone's pocket. "He can lift a wallet better than anyone."
- LIMIT:** The maximum amount allowed on one bet against the house.
- LINE:** Odds given on sports and race betting. "What's the line on Denver today?"
- LINE MACHINE:** A slot machine with more than one payoff line.
- LITTLE JOE FROM KOKOMO:** Crap term for the point of four. "Come on little Joe from Kokomo."
- LIVE ONE:** A gambler or mark looking very excited about entering a game. "Here comes a live one."
- LIZARD:** A slow racehorse. A sick or poor quality racehorse. "You gonna bet on that lizard again?"
- LOAD:** Weights placed in dice to make them roll in favor of whoever loaded them.
- LOADED DICE:** Dice that have been altered with weights. "The way the dice kept coming up sevens, I think they were loaded."
- LOAN SHARK:** Person who loans money for high interest. Interest is usually due weekly. Rates are usually between five percent and ten percent/week. Interest due on this type of loan is called a "vig."
- LOCK:** Having little chance of losing. "I've got a lock on this game." Having little doubt about a win.
- LONG SHOT:** A racehorse given big odds against winning. A bet placed on a horse with big odds. "I'm betting the long shot in the eighth."
- LOSER:** A gambler who rarely has a winning day. One not used to winning ways. An easy mark. "He's such a loser, only blind luck will make him a winner."

LOSING STREAK: A period of several days or weeks without a winning day.
"I hope things get better, I've been on a losing streak."

MADBALL: The crystal ball used by fortune-tellers.

MAN: Police or other officials. "Watch out for the man today."

MANIPULATOR: An expert con man who usually takes all the mark's money.

MARK: The pigeon. The center of attention in a crooked game. Easy to take money from. The patsy. A gambling idiot.

MARKER: Casino term for loan or credit. "I want a marker for \$5,000."

MAX: Term used by a gambler wishing to bet the limit. "I bet the max." The largest amount that could have been won on a particular bet. "I got the max."

MEAL TICKET: Used to identify a gambler's backer. "He's my meal ticket."

MECHANIC: A dealer who is an expert at cheating. "This guy's cleaning us out; send in the mechanic." An excellent card player. Is also used in major casinos as identifying an expert dealer who is legit.

MELTED: Big loser. Broke because of gambling. "They melted me last night."

METER: Device used to keep a running total of slot machine payouts.

MIDWAY: The area of a carnival where customers are allowed to walk.

Usually defines the area where the games and concessions are located.

MISSSES: Dice that have been altered to make sevens more often than legitimate dice.

MITT: A fortune-teller.

MITT JOINT: A fortune-teller's tent.

MOB SCENE: Carnival term for a rather large number of customers. "it was a mob scene last night."

MONEY CARD: The winning card in three-card monte. "All right my man, find the money card and win the money."

MONKEY: Carnival word for customer.

MOOCH: A mark in a carnival game. A person who stands and watches as a carnival barker attempts to get players for his game but does not play.

"I kept calling but he was nothing but a mooch." A fool. A person always borrowing money or using others' property. "I wish he'd get a job and quit mooching off me."

MOVE: Making a cheating play. "One move and I got his money."

MUCK: The discards during a poker hand and usually located to the left of the dealer. "He's done with his hand, muck his cards."

MUCKER: An assistant to a roulette dealer whose duties are to stack checks at the end of each game.

MUFF: The act of dropping altered dice onto the table or playing area unintentionally.

- MULTIPLIER:** Term given a slot machine that has various levels of payoffs. Payoffs multiplied by the number of coins placed in the machine. Two- to five-coin machines.
- MURPHY:** A con game where the mark thinks he's been given an envelope containing a large sum of cash, when actually it contains pieces of worthless paper.
- MUSCLE:** Bouncers hired by con men to keep out-of-line marks in line. "He's giving us a problem, get some muscle." Persons in a broad tossing mob who are in charge of keeping nosey bystanders away from the action. A person who makes collections for loan sharks.
- NAILED:** To be caught cheating. "Poor Louie, he got nailed by the cops last night."
- NATURAL:** in a craps game it's the number seven or eleven when rolled on the come out roll. "He threw five naturals in a row."
- NICKEL AND DIME JOINT:** A very small gambling operation.
- NICKING:** To make small marks in cards during play so they can be identified later in another player's hand.
- NOBLER:** A person who drugs or injures horses or dogs prior to racing.
- NON-VALUE CHECKS:** Colored chips dispensed to roulette players. These chips are valued by the amount the player wishes to bet.
- NUMBERS RACKET:** A series of numbers picked by gamblers that are associated with the running of several horse races each day.
- NUTS:** A three-shelled con game. Word used to identify the best possible hand in a Texas Hold 'Em game. "I couldn't beat him, he had the nuts."
- ODDS ON:** Gambling term meaning there's a very good chance of winning a particular bet. "Clay is odds on favorite to win the fight."
- OFF ACTION:** Spoken out loudly by a craps player signaling he no longer wants his odds bet working. Usually done when a player feels a seven is about to come out.
- ON A ROLL:** Having won several times in a row. Being a consistent winner over a period of time. "He's been on a roll for two days now."
- ONE-ARMED BANDIT:** A slot machine.
- ON THE SQUARE:** Being honest. Running an honest game. "It's a good house, it's on the square."
- ON THE TAKE:** Police or officials who are taking bribes. "We're gonna be OK on this one; Judge Dixon is on the take."
- OUTSIDE MAN:** One who is responsible for getting a mark into a game. A lookout outside a house.

- PACKAGE:** A deck of cards marked and ready to be placed in play. "Give the dealer this package."
- PACKING:** Carrying a handgun. "Don't mess with him, he's packing."
- PAINTER:** A card dauber.
- PAIR:** Poker term for two-of-a-kind. "I have a pair of aces."
- PAPER:** Marked cards. "Paper's in the game." Counterfeit money.
"Someone's been buying into the game with paper."
- PASS:** A winning number for the shooter and players betting on the pass line. The number seven or eleven on the come out roll. Duplicating the first number made before rolling a seven.
- PASSERS:** Dice altered to make more "numbers" than sevens.
- PASS LINE:** The area marked on a crap table where players place their bets indicating they bet the shooter will pass.
- PAST POST:** When a player calls out a number after the dice have stopped rolling and the dealer calls it a bet.
- PATCHER:** A person responsible for making peace between a crooked carnival operator and local police. "The heat is on; send the patcher downtown."
- PAYOFF:** The location and time money made from a con is to be split up.
"Meet at the Red Fez at 9:00 for the payoff."
- PEATERS:** Dice altered to repeat certain numbers more often than they should.
- PEEK:** When a dealer allows a player to see the next card to be dealt.
- PEEK AT THE POKE:** Sneaking a peek into a mark's open wallet to see how much money he has.
- PEGGER:** A tool used to peg cards.
- PEGGING:** Placing small braille-like bumps on cards.
- PENNY PLAY:** Very small wagering.
- PERCENTAGE:** Term used by gamblers determining the odds of a certain event happening. "What's the percentage of the seven coming out now?"
- PIECE OF THE ACTION:** Phrase used by a con man when asking for part of the con game. "I'd like a piece of that action." Used by a gambler signifying he would like part of a gambling bet being offered. "I'll take half of that action."
- PIGEON:** A mark. A very easy mark.
- PIGEON HUSTLE:** Creating a story about stolen property and then telling the mark he can purchase it at a fraction of what it's worth. Usually there isn't any merchandise, but when there is, it's worthless.
- PILE:** Large gambling winnings. "I won a pile last night."
- PINCHING:** Taking chips from a bet after the game is in progress.
- PIT:** Area behind crap and blackjack dealers. Area occupied by people in charge of craps and blackjack games.
- PLUCKED LIKE A CHICKEN:** Phrase used during a conversation between

- con men relating how well a mark was taken. "We plucked him like a chicken."
- POINT:** Numbers in a craps game, when rolled on a come out roll, if duplicated before a seven is rolled, wins.
- POINT SHAVING:** Usually associated with professional sports. Athletes are paid to keep the winning score within a predetermined margin.
- POINT SPREAD:** The point difference given teams for a handicap for betting purposes.
- POKE:** A mark's wallet.
- POKE A TIP:** A come on by carnival barkers. Usually a free, brief peek at the action to gain a customer's interest in seeing the whole show for the price of admission.
- POKER FACE:** A player who shows no emotion when holding a big hand.
- POT:** Money bet by poker players that is gathered in the center of the poker table until being awarded to the winner.
- POTATO:** Money. Usually \$1. "I'll bet five potatoes."
- PRESSING:** Adding chips to a bet already made after the game is in progress. A crap term used to tell the dealer to increase the size of a bet before the next roll of the dice.
- PROGRESSIVE SLOTS:** Slot machines whose jackpots increase with play. These machines usually start tabulating a jackpot at the customary limit of other machines of the same playing value. These jackpots increase until the winning combination appears.
- PROP:** An employee hired by a card room to play poker to make a poker game look full. This type of player is usually required to give up his seat when a customer wishes to play. Short for proposition player. A player hired to play poker with his own money (as opposed to a shill who plays with house money).
- PROPOSITION:** A wager. An invitation to wager. A technique used to lure marks into a game.
- PROPS:** Tools, equipment, furnishings, and other necessary items needed for a sting operation.
- PUFFER:** A craps shooter who, just prior to shooting, blows small puffs of air into the closed hand holding the dice. A carnival employee whose job is to act like a customer and mingle with the crowd talking up the carnival games. A carnival employee who talks to customers and exaggerates the amount or size of prizes to be won.
- PULLING UP:** When a mark quits the con game and still has money.
- PUMPKIN:** Small towns along a carnival's route that aren't worth stopping at. "Just passing through this pumpkin."
- PUNK MAN:** A carnival employee whose job it is to train new employees, usually young boys.

PUSHOVER: An easy mark. A person easily tricked out of their money. "Like taking candy from a baby; he was such a pushover."

PUT ON: A tall tale intended to attract a mark into a con game.

PUTTING ON THE RAISE: The art of making a mark bet more than he intended.

PUTTING ON THE SEND: The art of making a mark go home for more money.

QUEERING THE BET: A phrase used to describe the actions of an outsider who makes a move or remark and scares the mark into leaving.

QUICK PUSH: A very easy mark. "It didn't take long to bust him out, he was a quick push."

RABBIT: A member of a con game who enters the game as a customer, makes several fast, winning bets, and leaves.

RACK: The box in front of a dealer containing chips or cash. A container used to carry chips from the cashier's cage to the table and vice versa. "Get me a rack for my chips, I'm going home."

RAIL BIRDS: Poker game spectators.

RAISE: Increasing the size of a bet made by another player. "I'll raise that bet \$10."

RAKE: The percentage of money taken out of a poker pot by the house, usually 5 to 10 percent.

RAZZLE DAZZLE: A very crooked carnival game. Term used by con men to describe fast talk designed to confuse marks. "I gave him the razzle dazzle."

READERS: Cards altered so they can be read while in another player's hand.

REAMED: Taking all of a customer's available money by cheating. "We really reamed him."

RED BIRD: A \$5 gaming chip.

REPEATERS: Loaded dice. Loaded in such a manner they repeat the same numbers often.

REUBEN: Carnival word for a customer who acts like an idiot. A small-town hick. Person who has no practical sense. A buffoon gambler. "Look at that Gabriel fellow, he acts like a Reuben."

RIDING: Making a mark feel intimidated to the point he can't or won't complain about being taken.

RIFFLE: Professional term for shuffling cards.

RINGER: A horse substituted for another in a stakes race. Replacing an

- amateur player with a professional without the knowledge of other players. "They put in a ringer."
- RINKY DINK:** Items that are sold or given as prizes that have little or no value. "This is some rinky dink stuff I won."
- RIP AND TEAR:** Term used to describe blatant cheating by a con man who doesn't care who sees him doing it. "This guy's a real rip and tear."
- RIP-OFF:** Stealing. A strong con game. "That game's a real rip-off."
- ROAD HUSTLER:** A traveling con man.
- ROLL:** The throwing of dice in a craps game.
- ROOK:** To cheat. Keeping someone from receiving their share of winnings. "They rooked me out of my share."
- ROPE:** Getting marks to enter a game. "Go rope some business."
- RUG JOINTS:** Name given to gambling operations that are legit.
- RUSH:** Used by poker players to announce they have had several winning hands in a row. Used to announce a very good winning session. "I was on a rush all night." Used by superstitious players who will bet on any hand after winning several in a row. "I'm playing my rush."
- SANDING:** Using sandpaper to shave or discolor the sides of playing cards.
- SAP:** An easy mark. An easily duped mark. Acting like an idiot. "He's such a sap."
- SAWDUST JOINT:** Name given to a house, casino, or any other gambling operation that cheats. These operations are usually on the move to avoid being detected by law enforcement agencies.
- SEAT MAN:** A carnival employee placed in the audience of a sideshow. Is usually picked to take part in the show and acts as if he doesn't know what's happening.
- SCORE:** Money made from a crooked game. Money made from a legit game. Usually associated with a large sum of money. "I scored big on the crap table."
- SCREEN OUT:** To move in such a manner that the mark is unable to view a cheating move by a dealer.
- SETUP GAME:** A gambling game set up specifically to fleece a mark or marks. Preparations for these games are sometimes elaborate and time-consuming.
- SETUPS:** Cards previously used in a game that have been placed back into correct order and are ready to be re-entered into a game. Usual order is, with cards face up, spades, hearts, clubs, and diamonds. Each suit starting with the ace and going to king.
- SHADE:** Cover up a cheating move. Screen out.
- SHELL GAME:** A game played with three shells and a ball called a pea.

- SHILL:** A person hired by a card room to play poker. Exact duties as a prop except a shill uses house money to play.
- SHOE:** A box used to hold cards to be dealt in blackjack and baccarat. The usual amount of cards is four decks. Some shoes have more or less.
- SHOE IN:** A horse that will win a race and was determined to do so prior to race time.
- SHOOTER:** The craps player whose turn it is to throw the dice.
- SHOOTING GALLERY:** A carnival midway game using firearms to shoot at moving and stationary targets for prizes.
- SHOOT THE WORKS:** Betting it all. Leaving entire winnings on the crap table for one final roll. "Shoot the works."
- SHORT CON:** A con short in duration.
- SHORT CAKE:** Shorting other cons out of their share of the take.
- SHORTCHANGE ARTIST:** A carnival employee expert in the art of short-changing customers. Usually operates in carnival midways.
- SHORT SHOE:** A dealing shoe with less than the required amount of cards.
- SHOT:** A crooked move intended for a mark. "I took a shot at him." A bet against the house. "I took a shot at 'em in the fifth race at Hollywood."
- SHOVE:** Passing off counterfeit currency. Getting counterfeit money into a game.
- SHUFFLE:** Mixing a deck of cards prior to dealing. Riffle. A professional dealer will use a series of actions to complete a shuffle. An example would be to riffle, riffle, strip the deck, riffle, and then cut.
- SHY:** Short for shylock.
- SHYLOCK:** A loan shark. A person who loans gamblers money for a very high rate of interest.
- SIDE POT:** A separate pot that is made after one or more players have run out of money during a hand. The player unable to bet is eligible for the center pot only. Only those players continuing the betting are eligible for both pots.
- SIX BITS:** 75 cents.
- SIX CAT:** A carnival con game involving the throwing of baseballs at stuffed cats.
- SKIM:** Stealing gaming profits prior to paying any bills, usually to avoid paying taxes.
- SLEEPER:** A bet left on a gaming table. A confederate's bet that is purposefully left on the table by a dealer.
- SLICE:** A share of the gambling profits. "I want my slice."
- SLIDE SHOT:** A dice throw used to give the thrower an advantage.
- SMALL POTATOES:** Very small wagers. "They were only betting small potatoes."
- SNAKE BIT:** Term used by gamblers who have been on a losing streak. "I can't seem to win at anything lately, must be snake bit."

- SNAKE EYES:** Both dice coming up aces. The number two in craps. "He crapped out with snake eyes."
- SNOWBALLS:** Dice altered to have only the numbers four, five, and six.
- SOFT ACTION:** An easy mark. Using cash in place of chips during a game.
- SPIEL:** A story made up to entice a mark into a con game. A prearranged story to tell authorities should they ask questions.
- SPILL:** Making the disastrous move of dropping more than two dice on the table. "Joe's in trouble, made a spill last night at the club."
- SPLASH MOVE:** Making a fake cheating move in order see if anyone is paying attention. Same as test shot.
- SPOONING:** The use of a spoon-looking device to trip the lever inside a slot machine, thereby releasing any coins in the coin shoot.
- SPOTTER:** Person who looks for dealers who are inexperienced in attempts to easily cheat the casino.
- SPRING:** A very large wager.
- SQUAT:** Money made from carnival con games.
- SQUEALER:** A mark who gets excited enough to hop up and down and scream when he thinks he's about to win. A person who informs police or other officials about illegal gambling or con operations.
- STACKED DECK:** A deck of cards that are arranged prior to being placed in a game and when dealt will result in a win for a designated player.
- STAKES:** Gambling prize. Horse race winnings. Poker pot.
- STALL:** Slowing down the action of a con game to give other marks a chance to join in.
- STAND:** Blackjack term meaning no more cards. A decision by the player not to take additional cards. "Want a hit? No. I stand."
- STEER:** The art of moving marks into a crooked game.
- STEER JOINT:** A house where marks are sent to become involved in a crooked game.
- STICK:** A player who is part of the crooked game. "Bob is the stick tonight."
- STIFF:** A gambler who doesn't tip the dealers or cocktail waitresses.
- STING:** Name given a con game involving numerous personnel and usually nets a very large amount of money. The actual moment a mark is relieved of his money. Police term for an undercover operation.
- STRIPPER CARDS:** Cards that have been slightly shaved along the edges.
- STRIPPING THE DECK:** Term used to describe the cutting-type action used by a dealer during the shuffling of cards. (See "Shuffle.")
- STRONG MOVES:** Artful and excellent moves made by a professional con man. "He's the best; he makes some strong moves."
- STUCK:** To have heavy gambling losses. "I'm stuck three grand."
- STUD:** Word to describe a type of poker where a specific number of cards are dealt face down and some face up.

- STORE:** Word for an honest as well as dishonest gambling establishment. "I hear the Imperial Palace is a good store."
- SURRENDER:** Blackjack term. When a player is allowed to throw away an unfavorable hand before acting. In return the player is returned half the original bet.
- SWINGER:** Name given the carnival game that involves a ball suspended on a rope and a bowling-type pin.
- SWITCHING THE CUT:** A term for a cheating move while shuffling. The dealer cuts the cards but returns the cards to their original position in a one-handed move prior to dealing.
- TABLE STAKES:** Term used in poker houses to describe money on the table that is playable in the game.
- TAKE A BATH:** Losing a large amount of money gambling. Also "took a bath." "I really took a bath in the game yesterday."
- TAKE A BEATING (TOOK):** Term used to declare a bad gambling loss. "I took a beating at the Horseshoe last night."
- TAKE OFF:** A rip-off.
- TALE:** A story given a mark to lure him into a con game.
- TAP CITY:** Broke. No money. "I took a ride to tap city."
- TAPPED:** Broke. No money. "I can't go to the club tonight, I'm tapped." Same as tap city. "I can't go tonight, I'm tap city."
- TAT:** A single die that has only the numbers five and six.
- TATTOOED:** Describing a large gambling loss. "They sure tattooed me last night."
- TEAR UP:** The act of simulating the destruction of a mark's check when actually it wasn't and will be cashed as soon as possible.
- TELL:** An accidental move by a con man that gives away the trick. Poker term for reflex actions by a player that give away his hand. "He has a distinct tell every time he bluffs."
- TEN SPOT:** A \$10 bill.
- TEST SHOT:** A fake cheating move made by a con artist to see if anyone is paying attention.
- TEXAS HOLD 'EM:** A form of poker using multiple betting rounds and "community" cards.
- THIRD BASE:** The last seat to the right of the dealer in a blackjack game. The last player to receive cards prior to the dealer in blackjack. For example, if there are only two players at a table, the second player would be considered to be playing third base.
- THROW:** To lose on purpose. "They paid me to throw the fight."
- TIE:** When the dealer and one or more players have the same total, usually resulting in a push.

TILT: A malfunction of a slot machine.

TIP-OFF: Advance warning to police of a pending gambling or con operation. Squealing to the police prior to any action. "We'll get them this time, we got the tip-off we were looking for."

TOKE: Gaming word for tip. "He gave the dealer a \$10 toke."

TOKES: Casino term for tips.

TOP PEEK: A cheating move. When the dealer takes a look at the top card, or cards, prior to dealing to players.

TOPPING: Palming the top cards in a deck prior to dealing.

TOTE BOARD: Blackboard at a book-making operation. The scoreboard at a racetrack that shows the odds, winners, and other pertinent information.

TRACK: The groove on a roulette wheel where the ball rolls until the wheel stops.

TURN AROUND: A move or sound made to entice a mark to either turn his head or turn all the way around during a cheating move.

TREY: Gamblers' word for the number three.

TWENTY SPOT: A \$20 bill.

TWO-BIT PLAYER: A cheap hustler. Small-time gambler.

TWO BITS: 25 cents.

TWO SPOT DEUCE: A \$2 bill.

TWO-WAY HOUSE: A gambling house that plays either crooked or straight, depending on the conditions.

UGLY CUSTOMER: An unruly mark. "We had to get him out of here, he turned into an ugly customer."

UP CARD: In blackjack, it's the card the dealer receives that is placed face up.

VIG: Slang term for money paid as interest on a loan from a loan shark. "The vig's 10 percent a week." The house cut for providing poker tables and dealers. Short for vigorish.

VIGORISH: Term for money paid as interest on a loan from a loan shark. The house cut for providing poker tables and dealers. Also known as the drop.

VOID THE CUT: A slight-of-hand move by the dealer to return the cards to the original position after another player has cut the cards.

WAD: A large roll of money, usually wrapped by a rubber band. "I blew the whole wad."

WALK AROUND MONEY: Term used to describe gambling money. An amount of money a gambler feels comfortable carrying in his pocket. Pocket change. Phrase used to put down another player. "You only bet a thousand? To me that's just walk around money."

WALL MAN: A person designated to be a lookout for police during an outside con game. Usually associated with a back alley craps game or three-card monte game.

WELCH: Failing to pay a gambling debt. Deny making a verbal wager when actually one was made.

WHAMMY: A very angry mark.

WHEEL HEAD: The part of the roulette wheel that spins.

WHIP SHOT: A whipping motion used by a craps player to control the dice.

WIPE: A con game in which the mark thinks the handkerchief he has is full of money, when actually it's filled with cut up paper.

WIRE: A con game involving horse race betting. This con game was the basis for the movie "The Sting."

WIRED: Poker term meaning three of a kind on the first three cards dealt to a player. "I had aces wired."

WORK IS DOWN: Crooked dice or cards are in the game. "The work is down."

YARD: \$100. "I bet a yard on the game." A \$100 bill.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author has approximately 40 years' experience in various types of back room, barroom, street, and organized gambling. Starting around age 11, the author began learning about carnival tricks and various street scams. A tour of duty in the armed forces was a beginning education in back room and barroom gambling. After discharge, the author worked driving a beer truck in Lake County, Illinois. During this period the author was introduced to, and ultimately became employed by, people in charge of various gambling operations, including pinball machine and jukebox operations. At age 27 the author moved to Las Vegas, graduated from the Strip Dealers School, and began employment dealing blackjack. Over the next several years the author moved up to dealing poker and eventually became a floor man in a major Strip casino.

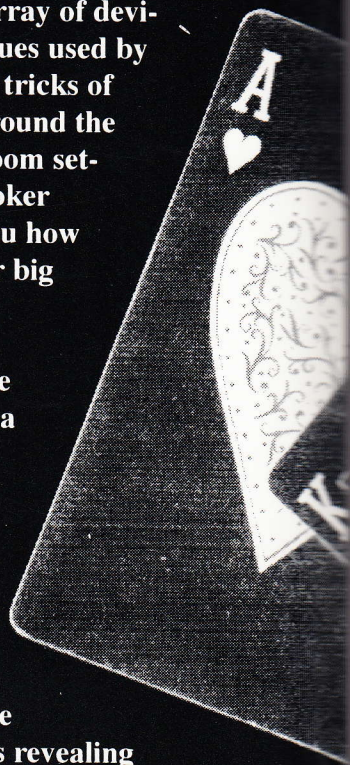
During the Vegas years, the author made friends with many people from every sector of the gaming community. These friendships led to information about the industry and is the basis for much of the information in this book.

It's time for *you* to be the high roller!

How is it that a tiny handful of people actually make a good living at gambling while you always seem to walk away from the gaming tables and slots with empty pockets and a sick feeling in your stomach? Tired of getting the short end of the deck? Then this is the book for you!

Weasel Murphy, a professional gambler and former casino worker, lifts the black curtain hiding the secrets of the gambling world in *The Professional Gambler's Handbook*, the first book of its kind that takes you deep into the mysterious world of the professional gambler. You will learn a staggering array of devious cheats, scams, ploys, and legitimate techniques used by the world's top gamblers, as well as the myriad tricks of the trade used by casinos and gambling halls around the world. From back-alley crap shoots and card room set-ups to Las Vegas casino slots and high-stakes poker games, Weasel tells all. In doing so, he shows you how to spot a cheat or scam, work a slot machine for big cash, take bundles of money from unsuspecting chumps, run an inside job on a casino floor for hundreds of thousands of greenbacks, outwit the house at craps and Texas Hold 'Em poker, deal a dirty deck without anyone suspecting a thing, load a pair of dice, and much more.

Very few of those big-spending cardsharps you see being chauffeured around the Strip in Vegas got that way by relying on luck. They're relying on insider know-how to beat the odds and rake in the dough. Now you can ride along with them and drive away with all the chips by knowing the tricks in Weasel Murphy's revealing new book!



A PALADIN PRESS BOOK
ISBN 0-87364-915-X

